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ABSTRACT

Because the traditional methods of adult literacy training frequently fail to achieve their objectives and because their implementation on a vast scale would be too costly, this UNESCO guide is presented as an aid in linking literacy campaigns to national development projects and the motivations for change which these might arouse among the rural target populations of the Third World. The guide illustrates the way in which agency personnel can get acquainted with the target area/population and how a literacy programme shculd be explained to the participants. General suggestions are presented, providing enough liberty for the experts to act on the special needs of the population and according to their own professicnal interests. Preliminary considerations in the study of the rural environment are reviewed. Specific problems are then examined from a theoretical standpcint: these include regional and local surveys, farming methods, land ownership, transmission of property through kinship ties, irrigation, cooperative activities, role of women, technology of the area (primitive or skilled), and the attitude of the population towards education. The second half of the guide deals with the practical procedures for conducting an environmental study including how to get preliminary information, how and with whom to conduct interviews, and how to quickly conduct a village survey. (AN)

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CONTRIBUTION TO STUDY OF THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY OPERATIONS

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CONTRIBUTION TO STUDY OF THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY OPERATIONS

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FOREWORD

The state of illiteracy in which approximately 800 million people of the world population live is a disgrace to the whole of mankind. Illiterates, being unable to benefit fully from the cultural achievements of mankind, are the victims of discrimination in all spheres. It is because of this that Unesco, during the three decades since its creation, has devoted considerable efforts towards eradicating illiteracy throughout the world. In accordance with the decisions taken at the nineteenth session of the General Conference of Unesco, these efforts must be considerably intensified. It is within this context that preparations are being made for the implementation of a wide programme of activities aimed at promoting rural development, in which literacy and post-literacy training are inherent and indispensable features. It is common knowledge that the map depicting poverty in the world corresponds with that illustrating illiteracy, and that the absolute number of illiterates is steadily increasing despite a slight decrease in the percentage. To curb this adverse trend, a broad range of measures must be used, the planning and organization of adult literacy projects playing a major role. Future progress in this field will clearly depend increasingly on the scientific approach adopted in literacy projects and campaigns, based on adequate knowledge of the illiterates themselves and their social and cultural environment.

International and national experts and the organizers, administrators and leaders of literacy programmes need extensive experience, theoretical analyses and practical guides for use in their work. The process of teaching people to read and write, when properly organized, consists of several steps, among which the study of the environment deserves special consideration, for it constitutes a prerequisite for tackling all the subsequent stages so that the social and educational objectives that have been initially planned may be achieved.

The purpose of this guide is to illustrate for all those concerned some of the theoretical problems in the initial stage and to provide some practical advice concerning possible solutions. Naturally, all the various aspects of such a difficult and complex subject are far from being exhausted and this guide is but a modest and partial contribution in respect of this problem.

A study of the milieu should cover major aspects such as the social, economic and cultural environment, health and nutrition, and attitudes towards child and adult education, etc. Consequently, this work must be regarded as no more than an initial attempt at study of the environment with a view to the planning of literacy projects within the broader framework of rural development. In the following stages those other aspects should be highlighted, without losing sight of the important role that national experts and the communities concerned can play in research and in the application of its findings. This study is not intended, in principle, for specialists in environmental studies. By these we mean professionals who, from different standpoints, have been trained and have acquired experience in the study of society "in vivo" and, more especially, sociologists and anthropologists. It will be seen subsequently that these specialists may possibly derive some benefit, all the same, from what we shall attempt to explain in these pages. This is not because our intention is to teach them anything whatsoever about their profession, but simply because the use of a certain number of their

methods could show them the practical benefits which can be derived when, in a campaign for development and literacy, the guiding principle is the achievement of a certain level of efficiency, rather than strictly scientific aims.

For whom, then, are our suggestions and recommendations intended ? Essentially for those in positions of responsibility who, at some stage in their work, need to give considerable thought to the men and women making up the societies on which they propose to bring influence to bear. We cannot draw up a comprehensive list of all those who could possibly find some food for thought in what we have to say in these pages. We can, however, identify some categories of potential users.

There are, first of all, national and international experts working on development projects involving literacy training who are members of multidisciplinary teams that are increasingly indispensable for field work. We shall return to the question of multidisciplinarity, an ideal that is so rarely achieved but represents a condition of efficiency which must be fulfilled not only when conducting the development programme, but also when embarking on the study of the environment itself, the scene of the action. The experts involved usually possess considerable technical abilities (in the fields of agriculture, hydraulics, medicine, technology, etc.) but, more often than not, they have only a very vague idea of how to approach human societies. This would seem only too obvious as regards foreign experts who cannot be expected fully to apprehend the social reality which is the field of their activities when this reality is so very different from their own. However, an awareness of this difference can, while the feeling of "otherness" lasts, be a means of remaining alert and constantly pondering over the dangers of ethnocentrism for the understanding of the societies studied. National experts are not at all immune from errors of interpretation with regard to their own country, precisely because they take the knowledge they have for granted. Yet, just as the European city-dweller has no knowledge of the rural society with which he lives in close proximity, unless he has had special preparation for this purpose, so the national expert, all too often a city-dweller as well, will not understand his own rural society any more readily.

Among other persons who might find this study useful are the officials in various departments who play a part in the preparation and implementation of development and literacy projects, and the literacy instructors, who, in practical terms, work constantly in the field and are the means of disseminating new techniques, of an economic as well as an educational kind. It is these agents of economic and social change, to a greater extent than the other categories referred to, that need to know how to make contact with social groups and how to avoid the sort of mistakes that bring about the failure of the most well-intentioned development projects, insufficient care being taken to establish them on firm foundations within their particular environment, that is, to make them an integral part of the social organization of those who live there. This study is, therefore, presented in the guise of a hand-book so as to guide preliminary research operations, which should be constantly adjusted by means of feedback procedures, which will enable these projects for social and economic change to be carried out with a reasonable chance of success.

This document has been drafted and finalized by Unesco consultants. The subject is far from having been dealt with exhaustively. But publication of this document may prompt other specialists to voice their comments so that the content may be amplified and a more detailed guide on this subject issued in the near future.

AN OVERVIEW OF PEASANT SOCIETIES

This study, or rather this guide, will deal only with problems to be found in the rural environments of developing countries.

These rural environments are extremely varied in nature. It is certainly very difficult to establish comparisons between the various peasant societies in the countries of South East Asia, for instance, and between those of Africa or of Latin America. Even within the limits of a region such as South East Asia, it is very difficult to compare the way of life of Vietnamese peasants from the delta areas and that of the semi-nomadic communities of the mountainous areas of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. We are very aware of this fact but if these major differences are disregarded, it is because it would seem to us that all these communities nevertheless possess a certain number of common characteristics which enable us to consider them as a whole. It has to be said straightaway, however, that this manner of viewing the situation remains somewhat artificial and we must decide to adopt a standpoint which can enable us, in a reasonable fashion, to find our bearings in a constantly changing context.

The main characteristic which would seem to make it possible to consider all peasant societies as a single whole is not so much their illiteracy as what is customarily referred to as their traditionalism. Illiteracy is not symptomatic of peasant societies alone. Urban societies in pre-industrial times were largely illiterate and it is an accepted fact that rapidly expanding towns in Africa, and the towns of North Africa and of Latin America too, have a very high degree of illiteracy.(1) Nonetheless, statistics clearly prove that the rate of illiteracy is always higher in rural societies.

On the other hand, traditionalism does seem to be typical of all peasant societies. This concept of traditionalism is also the obstacle confronting any person working in a rural area. It is the major pitfall of ethnocentrism, that is to say the societally-induced tendency of every individual to consider as natural the behaviour of his own social group and as aberrant, or in any case, dubious any other type of behaviour.

In western societies, the type of upbringing and education that people receive, devised exclusively by city-dwellers, predisposes them to reject or to consider merely of some poetical interest, all that does not fit into the industrial pattern of production or the type of society it has generated. Words such as tradition, traditional or traditionalism hardly have favourable connotations. They refer to the past. They can, perhaps, conjure up some state of calm blissfulness for which we may feel some nostalgia but to which we cannot seriously contemplate returning.

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(1) It is worth noting that many societies that are said to be illiterate may, nevertheless, have written expression as one of their typical cultural features. The mastery of writing is generally the privilege of a small social class, not necessarily of city-dwellers, which derives from the use of writing a degree of prestige which can be quite considerable due to the fact that it is linked with religious rituals. On the whole, the existence of a writing system and a sizeable literature in a given society is no yardstick for assessing its "modernity". cf. Jack Goody (ed.). Literacy in Traditional Societies, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968.

This attitude, which is quite natural to us, does not predispose us in any way to making contact with societies that do not share it.

We must, nevertheless, remind ourselves repeatedly that a so-called "traditional" society is a type of society that exists in positive terms (even if this existence is threatened by another type of society). At all events it seems vital to urge all international and national experts and all officials or other persons involved in development operations, never to view the society which they hope to influence as being one that is out of date or entirely negative in its attitude. Traditional societies have patterns of behaviour, and especially of economic behaviour, that have an inner logic based on a set of social values; these values, then, shape the whole range of different behaviour patterns. Such values and types of behaviour are instilled into people from infancy through education, thereby guaranteeing the perpetuity of the society that applies them. In developed countries, industrial society is taken for granted. It has a history and was not the fruit of spontaneous generation, but our education as a whole directs us towards a future whose horizons are not fixed. Social and economic models that have been discarded are regarded as stages through which we have necessarily had to pass but which have fortunately been superseded. Rural societies, and these in western countries too, are viewed with a certain pity as something obsolete, and whose disappearance must rightly be speeded up inasmuch as they are traditional societies, namely societies that have not assimilated our rational approach to economic matters or their planned nature.

In many instances, it would seem difficult to convince experts working in rural areas (may we stress again, in rural areas of industrialized countries just as much as in those of non-industrialized countries) that the type of economy in developed countries should in no way be taken for granted and that if peasants resist it or oppose it, it is because they have good reasons for doing so and not through any congenital stupidity which, with perhaps considerable patience, we might succeed in overcoming. The fact is that traditional peasant societies have excellent reasons for rejecting the mercantile type of economic behaviour pattern. Furthermore, in these societies, this sort of behaviour pattern does not exist in a latent state which a modicum of effort would suffice to actualize.

It must always be borne in mind that the process of adaptation to the industrial economy is not endogenous but exogenous. It is imposed from outside by foreigners (either on the country as a whole or on the rural sector), either directly, as was the case with colonization, or in an indirect way, through the economic destruction of traditional markets which were replaced by externally-controlled modern markets.

As Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out, "Adaptation to an economic and social order, whatever its nature, depends on the possession of a stock of empirical knowledge, transmitted through informal or specific education, knowledge - which is implicitly, rather than explicitly, learned through practice, like the command of one's mother-tongue, - such knowledge being bound up with an ethos, - that is to say, with a kind of "wisdom" which is not constituted and unified as such."(1)

Constant awareness of the positive and relatively well-adapted elements in the general behaviour patterns of the peasant populations

(1) Pierre Bourdieu, "La Société traditionnelle. Attitude à l'égard du temps et conduite économique". Sociologie du Travail, 1963, 5, p.26.

of the Third World must not lead us, however, to an idealized Rousseau-type view. We should, in fact, attempt to steer a moderate course between an appraisal that is excessively pessimistic and one that is exaggeratedly optimistic. The most prudent attitude would be to maintain a balanced position, however difficult, between critical scepticism with regard to the seemingly obvious soundness of all our contributions to development, which we would too often like to be interpreted as disinterested social aid, and qualified scepticism with regard to the seemingly unquestionable legitimacy of the patterns of behaviour, including those evident in the sphere of economics, of traditional rural societies.

If such an attitude were to be constantly maintained, we would, no doubt, make but little progress towards solving the problems associated with development projects involving literacy campaigns (this factor does not simplify matters) but we would at least have chosen a cathartic remedy calculated to ensure the lucidity of our approach.

Many pitfalls remain, however, and one of the most significant would seem to be the notion that has prevailed for some time, namely "the conception of the illiterate".

The illiterate peasant is usually identified by the fact that he cannot read, write or reckon. This seems to be an inadequate definition of an illiterate. It has to be said, moreover, that the assertion that the illiterate can neither count nor reckon is highly debatable. Generally, the expert overlooks the fact that, in some cases, the illiterate peasant can count and reckon because, although he obviously writes nothing down, he uses processes of mental arithmetic, often of a complex nature, which escape us completely because they have rarely attracted the attention of researchers. It seems likely, although this is no more than a supposition, that the calculations made by illiterate peasants are not particularly complicated, but they could quite possibly be neither more nor less primitive than those of literate people, when they are, for some reason, deprived of the medium of writing. Experts have probably devoted little more of their time to visiting markets in rural or urban areas of non-industrialized countries than to strolling about the cattle-markets of industrialized countries (though, admittedly, few are left today). If they were to do so, they would soon realize that the transactions conducted in such places are extremely complicated, for fairly large quantities may be involved and, more particularly, because equivalences have to be calculated between very varied products of quite different values, and that all these dealings are carried out without a single written entry.

Furthermore, the illiterate can legitimately boast of having developed a faculty that Europeans and Americans have tended to neglect, namely the memory, one of the most important functional faculties. This functional memory could even be said to be the main element that holds together these communities, which are sometimes of considerable size.

One of the major concerns of any person whose task it is to study the environment should be to undertake the analysis, however difficult, of this memory in action in illiterate societies. It would even be fair to say that this analysis should be the prime concern of any researcher.

Memory, in this instance, is not merely oral. It is not made up essentially of what has been said or heard, but of gestures of all kinds. This explains why rituals depend on memory, not only on the collective memory but also on the memory of individuals.

However, this faculty is not found to be equally well developed in all individuals; in every village there are some who possess it to a greater degree than the others. Although memory plays a significant part in illiterate societies, it is, above all, the gift of those who, especially in religious matters, are the village leaders.

If we place such emphasis on careful consideration of the various types of memorization that can easily be found in illiterate societies, it is because we believe that the literacy campaigns themselves can benefit greatly from them. There is no dirth of unflattering remarks made, for instance, about the so-called mechanical learning of the Koran in the marabout schools of Africa. Undoubtedly, some criticism is legitimate, but the fact remains that the memory is activated to a remarkable degree and individual human resources are thereby built up that can certainly be used for new learning processes, especially for writing, reading and arithmetic.

Although ethnologists do not seek to prove anything in principle, ethnological literature has amply shown that illiterate societies do not lack systems of symbolic representation. The trouble is that these systems are not understood by Europeans and Americans because many of these societies are concerned, not with figurative realism, but rather with non-figurative abstraction. For example, our expert, strolling around a market in any non-European country, stops to look at some richly patterned local material, which he finds decorative (but that is all). But if, instead of allowing himself to be misled by his initial impression, he questions his informant or even the producer of the material, assuming the latter understands the symbols himself, he will certainly be astonished at the wealth of symbols that the pattern or motifs depicted in these products of local craftsmanship conjure up in the minds of the people. Representations of this kind are, most probably, ill-suited to convey the technical messages which our images are expected to do, and we are, in any case, quite incapable of making them serve such a purpose. It would, at all events, be a mistake to claim that illiterates are unable to read (and to draw and write, so to speak) images. All that can be asserted is that they find it difficult to understand conventional graphic representations even if all the objects depicted belong to the visual spectrum of the peasant. Either he does not visualize the objects in his surroundings in such a way, or he does not understand the codification of the representation of reality.(1)

It is also time to dispel the prejudice - still occasionally met with - that the illiterate peasant cannot grasp anything that is technical. What seems to be meant by this is that the peasants have not mastered the construction of mechanical or electric motors and are ignorant of all the laws that have made such inventions possible. What then can be said of the illiterate carpenters who built those magnificent vast pagoda roof structures without using a single nail, but solely with dowels (as was customary among illiterate carpenters in Europe until the end of the nineteenth century), and with only a small number of perfectly adapted tools at their disposal, owing nothing to technically-minded Europe ? And what about those admirable potters of Asia and Central and South America who produced masterpieces, illiterate as they were, long before European influences reached them ? If, by techniques, we mean industrial techniques alone, then illiterate peasants are obviously very mediocre

(1) cf. articles by Tobelem and Couvert in "Discussion sur l'Alphabétisation", vol.2, Nos. 2 & 3 (1971). The pictures contain several major errors and the abortive result (3 of the 15 pictures were identified and correctly interpreted) is more the responsibility of the illustrator than of the illiterates.

technicians indeed. If, however, we mean all that makes it possible to transform materials efficiently for man's real and symbolic needs, then it is very difficult systematically to deny credit for mastery of such techniques to all peasants the world over.

Another error that stems from ethnocentrism is to assume that what distinguishes the illiterate from modern man is the lack of strict accuracy in the use of measurements of length, area, weight and especially time. The peasant certainly does not know about centigrades, millimetres and seconds : his own units of measurement are those of experience, and not objective units, at least in his present life-style. The units of measurement used by illiterate peasants may well strike us as being rather hazy and considerably lacking in precision. This does not mean that there is no awareness of this lack of precision nor that the peasant does not compensate for it, in one way or another. It must not be forgotten that the Western world also experienced a similar variety of systems of weights and measures without major drawbacks as long as the volume of goods traded was comparatively small. Those involved in such transactions were familiar with the various systems and switched from one to another with the greatest of ease. Admittedly, abuses may result from these practices, but they always reflect a power struggle. The creditor having the upper hand, easily imposes his conditions on his debtors. He does not cheat them, he robs them; they are quite aware of this but are in no position to refuse transactions that are to their disadvantage. This was the case during the pre-harvesting season in Viet-Nam when the villagers from the mountain plateaux turned, in times of difficulty, to merchants who lent them a can of paddy in exchange for two cans of hulled rice to be paid back later, once the harvest was over. The villagers knew perfectly well and to what extent they were being swindled but there was no alternative for them as they had no money to buy supplies.

There is no lack of good reasons for pomoting literacy but promising results are unlikely to be achieved so long as we continue to misjudge so absurdly the personality of the illiterate peasant and the type of society in which he lives, with its own particular patterns of production and consumption. It is not because the peasant is a "mentally backward" person that he has difficulty in learning new land cultivation methods, or even quite simply refuses to adopt them, but rather because he definitely feels, (even if he does not always say so explicitly) that the adoption of such methods would disrupt his entire social structure, his whole system of reference as well as all his customs. The peasant is profoundly aware, and at times manages to express this to those who are prepared to listen, that a new technique is not just a technique as such, but part and parcel of the society that produced it. It is quite understandable that the peasant, whether illiterate or not, should hesitate before launching into a new venture of which he does not know the ins and outs (that is, the society that produced the technique and the new social structure which will ensue if the result is not merely a systematic destruction of his present life without any compensatory factors), and that he should consequently prefer to hold on to what has so far been his livelihood. The peasant, whether illiterate or not, is, in fact, a far-sighted person. He is quite capable of weighing up the pros and cons and is comparatively well informed about the remarkable failure of some modern projects, due, in some cases, to a complete disdain for the "practical" information which the peasants of the area could have provided.

All this shows us to what extent meticulous study of the environment is required if our projects for eliminating illiteracy and encouraging development are to have some chance of success.

STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

We shall not deal here with the notion of functional literacy, about which so much has been, and continues to be written. The Unesco library has a wealth of books and literature illustrating the evolution of this concept. What is of prime importance to us is the environmental study concept which was introduced into the work procedures of Unesco at the same time as the functional aspect of literacy campaigns was being developed. It was because the traditional methods of adult literacy training frequently failed to achieve their objective and, more especially, because their implementation on a vast scale (in order to have some chance of proving effective) would have been much too costly, that general support was given to the idea of linking literacy campaigns to national development projects and the motivations for change which these might arouse among the target populations concerned. The methodology of this type of literacy campaign has been very clearly set out in a document issued by Unesco on 8 October 1975 within the context of the Experimental World Literacy Programme, entitled Méthodologie de l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle (technical document No. III).

We shall refer to diagram I which illustrates perfectly the part that the environmental study has to play in literacy training operations and its significance in the broader economics of a project.

It should be noted that study of the environment is not an absolutely original innovation as regards literacy work. It had always been taken into consideration to a certain extent but had never formed such an integral part of literacy projects as in the Experimental World Programme. Furthermore, our study could profitably be used as a preliminary evaluation operation, providing a broad view of the situation of the villagers and their environment before the programme is launched. Obviously, at the outset the specific features of each participant cannot be described (these will be dealt with in a later study), but details concerning the type of population, production, social relations, linguistic divisions, etc., will provide an overall picture which is just as important for the evaluation of the project as for our knowledge of the environment. Our basic aim here is to explain how a study of this kind should be tackled, so that it may be as valuable as possible and, more especially, to describe the type of obstacles that must be overcome if it is to be successful.

The place of the environmental study, as shown in diagram I, is between the objectives proposed or laid down by the government for its social and economic planning and all the operations which, on the basis of those objectives and their use as teaching material, will lead to the literacy campaign itself. In short, the place of the environmental study is between definition of the objectives and identification of the problems, that is, the obstacles to the achievement of those objectives.

In principle, an environmental study should facilitate the choice of regions in which the stated objectives can be identified as a major source of concern to the populations concerned. It is obviously a very complex task to designate areas of operations where the objectives are most likely to be achieved while, at the same time, winning the support and participation of the populations concerned and ensuring co-ordinated

action against illiteracy. In actual fact, these areas are almost always imposed from the start, at least in broad outline. This is hardly surprising and in no way arbitrary. When launching a cotton plantation project or a programme for any other agricultural product on an industrial scale, decision-makers will obviously choose the agricultural regions that are most suitable for this kind of production, have a good labour potential and are easily accessible so as to ensure easy marketing of the products.

These zones, nonetheless, are generally sufficiently extensive to enable pilot areas to be selected at a later stage for development and literacy campaigns. This should make it possible to define initial objectives more specifically, or even to suggest a certain number of modifications.

The environmental study should provide the opportunity for a multidisciplinary approach. The objectives defined by the government agencies in charge are of a highly practical nature and the participation of a wide range of experts is necessary if they are to be achieved. An agricultural project, even of the smallest scale, which is aimed at achieving a degree of industrial production requires an expert in irrigation and/or drainage, an agronomist, a specialist in animal husbandry, a specialist in packaging, and, for the study of the environment, a sociologist specializing in rural society, an instructor, an economist and a linguist. The problem is to decide who will assume the overall management of the survey and will co-ordinate all the information collated. This should most probably be the person responsible for evaluation as he or she will have an important part to play in the environmental study.

Objections as to the cost of such a carefully conducted study are rarely justified. As pointed out earlier, the funds devoted to the study are more often than not very limited compared with those allotted to agricultural research, and, on the other hand, even if they are fairly substantial, it must be stressed that they will always be considerably less than the vast sums spent on projects which fail because of inadequate knowledge of the environment. One solution for reducing costs is, obviously, to recruit specialists who are qualified in more than one field, such as a psycho-linguist, a socio-economist, a psycho-sociologist and an instructor specializing in home economics, etc.

The purpose of the environmental survey is essentially to study the conditions governing the workings of social practices and should never, or very rarely, be to enquire only into attitudes and opinions, as has often been the case in the past. We are interested, above all, in social practices, that is, the development of patterns of social behaviour vis-à-vis the constraints of the environment. This is why it is vital to introduce the socio-anthropological component into any study of the environment, for every development project, whether combined with literacy campaigns or not, seeks to bring about the permanent modification of such behaviour patterns; anthropology, on the other hand, is principally concerned with the study of social behaviour.

All research conducted within the framework of an environmental study must obviously be directed towards defining the procedures to be used in literacy training activities. The study of economic activities, and first and foremost, of course, the study of agricultural activities, must be conducted in the local language. Expressions used by the local people will, of course, be incorporated in the literacy training handbooks and cards. It will quickly be observed that all social groups,

however illiterate they may be, use arithmetic, a subject which must be studied. We know of no society that does not possess a sequence of numbers, though not necessarily with 10 as a base, as in the western world. Many societies use a counting system based on 5 or 20. Some social groups use two bases for their arithmetic, according to the type of activity for which numbers are required. If we find ourselves dealing with a social group that is totally ignorant of numbers, then a new approach must be adopted in the survey, as a mistake has certainly been made. On the other hand, a common phenomenon, which we shall return to later, is the remarkable agility in mental arithmetic which is displayed both for practical purposes (such as trade) and in play activities, for many games require the use of a highly developed combinative sense.

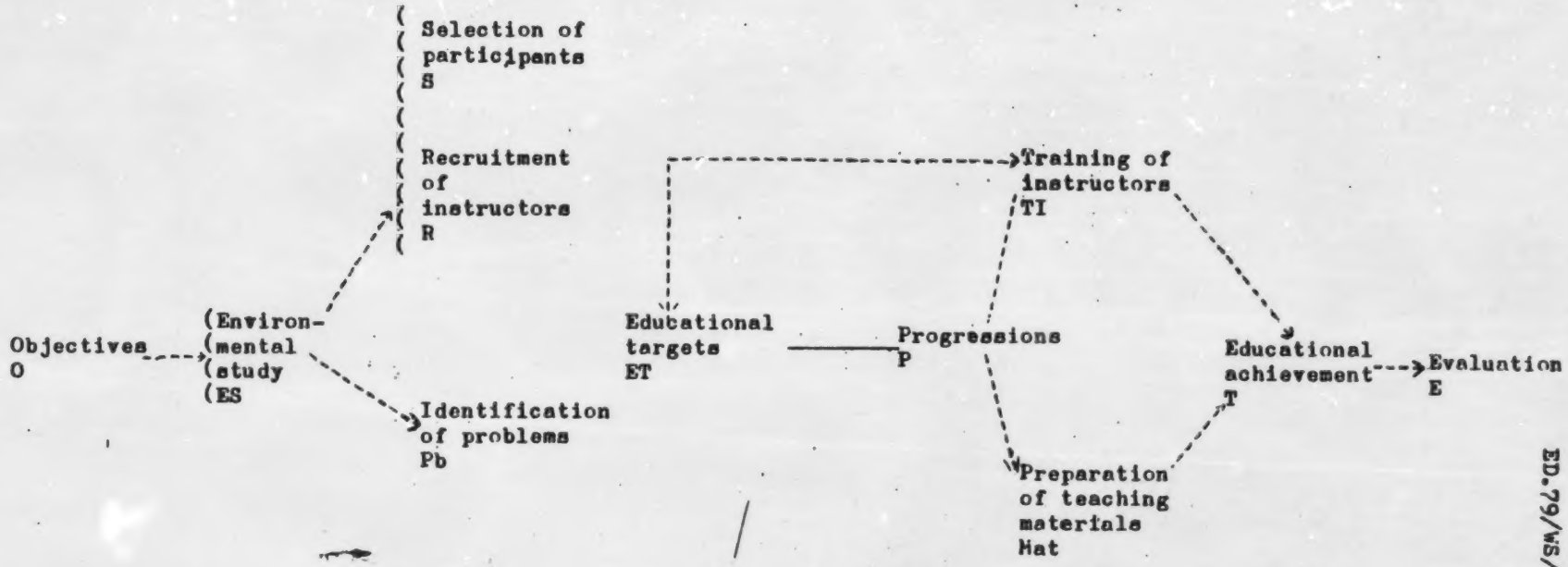
In the first part, we shall examine, from a theoretical standpoint, a number of problems that are likely to be met by anyone attempting a study of the environment, whether familiar to him or not.

The second part will deal more specifically with the practical procedures for conducting an environmental study.

Diagram I

Diagram illustrating Methodology

Sequence of operations



I - SURVEYS

The purpose of the systematic research that must be undertaken within the framework of a functional literacy project is to provide the instructors, as well as all the technicians who work with them, with the necessary background information which will enable them to understand, and suggest solutions for, the economic and social problems occurring in the social, economic and educational environment in the target area.

As stated above, the regions for which this guide is intended are either completely rural or very little urbanized. The issues arising in more intensely urbanized regions and in industrial zones located either in the country or in towns, lie outside our problem-area. To deal with socio-economic questions in urban and industrial zones, techniques are required which are, if not more complex, certainly very different from those used in rural regions. We shall proceed, at a later stage, to examine the methods to be used. Let us merely say here that these methods are characterized by specific surveys bearing on precise points rather than by vast data-gathering operations conducted in such a way as to meet the demands of the statistical processing to which the data are subsequently to be subjected. The main reason for this choice, which we shall examine at greater length, is the fact that it seems to us indispensable to know to what extent it is possible to induce a social group to assimilate techniques that are largely alien to its social and cultural ethos and, thus, to pursue investigations in the field of feasible transformations in the "habitus"(1) of adults as well as those, which are related, in the "habitus" of children. As we shall see, general information about the socio-economic life of a country in which a functional literacy project is to be developed is also very important for our survey, but rather as background material enabling us to visualize the project in its environment as a whole.

In general, the rural economy of the area considered is entirely based on the work of the peasants who often have very simple tools at their disposal. Simple does not mean rudimentary - which would suggest a certain inability to introduce technical innovation - for there is evidence, more often than not, of a remarkable adaptation to extreme climatic conditions on soils which are usually very poor. Furthermore, these tools and the cultivation methods for which they are designed exist within a society whose specific organization is an integral part of this farming technology. We have already stressed the tendency - in our view disastrous - of many experts from western countries, or trained in the modern techniques of the industrialized economy, to under-estimate the real technological potential of the non-industrialized countries they are studying.

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(1) "Habitus", as used here, denotes a system of permanent and transposable attitudes instilled during the primary socialization process in early childhood. This is followed in our societies by a secondary socialization process, a powerful influence on "habitus", which is implemented through schooling. The effects of this secondary process are less marked in the Third World countries because the period of schooling is shorter and does not involve all children.

The rural economy is, therefore, essentially the concern of the peasants, and governments have usually been very slow in showing any interest in regions with a so-called "subsistence" economy, not only as regards the dissemination of modern technology but also from the standpoint of general and even technical education.

While governments have been preoccupied by cost-of-living increases, the fall in trade figures, or epidemics raging in towns, they have shown little interest, for many years, in the fate of the rural sector, especially if, in the political arena, the peasants have not represented an organized force that might need to be subdued or won over.

Admittedly, a number of countries, while assigning high priority to the development of the urban and industrial sector, have implemented community development programmes for the benefit of rural populations, as in the case of India from 1952 onwards. It was only much later that governments began to give serious consideration to the problem of rural areas when it was realized that they might make a major economic contribution to the development of the country or when increased poverty, desertification and massive emigration towards the towns of a rapidly expanding rural population - this demographic trend being the result of the development of medical services - began to create problems. This was the case, among others, of countries which asked to take part in the world programme for promoting functional literacy. Profound changes became apparent under the pressure of the world economy whose consumption patterns and somewhat anarchical modernization requirements as regards the cultivation of tropical products for the world market affected the peasant farming sectors (within the framework of free market economies), although governments did not perceive this process at the outset. Land was overworked or divided up into infinitesimal holdings, and soil conservation methods, advanced as they had been in many regions which had maintained a subtle socio-ecological balance over the centuries, were abandoned on account of the urgent demands which had to be met in order to survive and which led to the destruction of the protective forestry reserves so as to make way for new crops. Erosion then set to work. This phenomenon of rapidly advancing erosion has become a mandatory part of any environmental study. In some cases, as in the Sahel region of Africa, it has even become virtually the only component calling for close attention.

We shall be faced throughout this work with problems of this kind, which are so widespread in all the countries of the Third World. Having noted this point, we should now consider what operations need to be carried out in rural areas so as to obtain a general picture of the social pattern which can help us to establish a functional literacy programme likely to have a sufficiently strong impact to bring about some of the desired changes. It must be stressed quite forcibly here that it hardly ever rests with the experts conducting an environmental study to designate the area (or areas) that seem to them to be the most suitable for development projects. The decision is quite beyond their control. It can be said that they are confronted with a fait accompli and have no alternative but to make a virtue of necessity and do the best they can with the survey area allotted to them. They can always indicate those villages which, according to the findings of their research, would respond badly, or not at all, to the demands of rural development programmes. Nonetheless, the final decision is in the hands of the government.

Once the region has been designated, the following points should be covered by a general environmental survey if subsequent functional

literacy projects are to make some impact on the social environment. We shall consider each point in turn, proceeding from the general to the particular.

A. Regional surveys

It is difficult, not to say impossible, to understand any specific human community of a comparatively small size such as those that are selected for experimental development projects, if we do not study it in the context of the conditions prevailing in the country as a whole.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that there can be no question of becoming swamped by details, for the details matter only within the framework of the project. It will suffice to collect such geographical, agronomical, economic, linguistic and demographical data as will enable us to form a general idea of the country in which the work is to be conducted.

In this connection, it must be borne in mind that any statistics already available should be used with some caution. It is only very recently that censuses in certain countries have begun to be more reliable sources of information. In any case, even when very detailed and well-presented statistics are obtainable, covering every possible type of economic activity, it will always be essential to look into the methods whereby they have been compiled. The greater the sophistication of data-handling techniques, the less the data should be taken at face value in countries that cannot afford such sophistication.

However, although such statistics are not always complete and up-to-date and may comprise contradictory information, the data they contain are not devoid of interest.

Those seeking to become acquainted with the geographical, economic and social features of a region will find that a few days are enough for acquiring an overall impression; they can ascertain on the spot whether village leaders and the officials of the agricultural, medical, educational and other services have a personal opinion about the statistics which the central authorities have at their disposal and to what extent the figures appear to be accurate to people working in the field.

The sort of information which will be obtained through these first contacts is not likely to be fully quantified, but it will give a rough idea of the geographical and economic characteristics of the country.

At this stage, the aims of the environmental study are to collect general data on the social structures of the community and the cultural models that have shaped in a special and original way the attitudes and behaviour patterns of the population, and to identify the institutions and bodies set up for the purpose of promoting development and elucidating the linguistic problems that might occur.

It must be remembered that most financial projects for international agencies are managed in such a way that the "turn-over" of experts is always fairly high. Yet these experts, who are called upon in various capacities to work on a project at one specific stage in its implementation, can devote only a few weeks at the most to their task and need this kind of information, for they themselves will not have time to acquire it through actual field work. It is the expert in environmental studies who should be responsible for presenting the general information about the region and this should be explicitly stated in a rational task-sharing

plan included in a comprehensive development programme. True integration can only be achieved if the inevitable "turn-over" of experts is taken fully into account. It can be said that this variable is practically never integrated into any development plan, with the paradoxical result that experts sometimes find in the end that the same research has been done twice, the second expert being totally unaware of the work carried out by his predecessor. However surprising it may seem, apparently insignificant absurdities of this kind must be taken seriously and it is the expert in environmental studies who should be most conscious of their importance because, in principle, his work sets the course of all the subsequent operations.

For the purposes of our study it is important to have a reasonably accurate list of the number of inhabitants in the region, the groups into which the population is divided, the predominant culture and the administrative organization, indicating where the local leaders and the representatives of local government services have their headquarters.

The important role played by language differences becomes abundantly clear when literacy campaigns are being planned! A language difference does not exist in isolation but always goes with an ethnical difference and/or with a religious difference. It is obviously necessary to provide a separate type of course for each language group, for otherwise part of the population may be denied the opportunity to benefit from the campaign. The two-language situation might of course become evident in the form of friction between two groups - probably aggravated by a difference of religion. By talking to the people themselves it is always possible to ascertain whether the friction is of a serious nature and to decide to what extent the courses can be co-ordinated. This will be taken into consideration when the choice of collaborators is made within the two groups so that the literacy classes can be conducted satisfactorily.

However, language relations may be good and the differences between the two groups may be much more of an economic nature: land-owners, for example, may be opposed to landless agricultural workers. On the other hand, a region may be found to be well integrated without any linguistic, religious or ethnical differences between an agrarian population applying a system which ensures very few disparities in land ownership. A visit of this kind, lasting a few days, will help us to get a better understanding of the region and its population.

B. Local surveys

The local survey is the core of the environmental study. With a detailed study such as this as the starting point, it will be possible to take decisions leading to changes in economic behaviour through the linking of educational work with purely technical projects for the modernization of agriculture.

1. Farming methods

It would seem quite unrealistic to think that it is possible to modify the cultivation methods of a given population without having first acquired a thorough first-hand knowledge of the communities involved. There would be no need to say this were it not for the fact that the prejudices against traditional cultivation methods which are most frequently expressed are so categorical that it seems quite sufficient to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of these methods, often through hearsay, since it is generally assumed, in any case, that they are doomed

to disappear. This attitude deprives us of the opportunity to appreciate the rich store of experience built up over the years by the inventiveness of farming communities in their efforts to survive in regions where living conditions are often very difficult.

This remark has been made, naturally, in order to impress on the expert the need to approach these communities in a spirit of great humility; it may be added that the study of farming methods can be an excellent way and even, in many cases, the most efficient one, of understanding the subtleties in the social practices and structures of the population which is the subject of the survey.

A study of the local environment can be based on the farming year, that is to say, on the sequence of tasks performed by men and women - who rarely do the same work - in the course of the twelve months of the year. We must remember that animal husbandry may be the main occupation of an entire population and, in this case, it is the pastoral cycle which will have to be taken as the basis for the report. The obstacles to surveys and, above all, to economic improvements in pastoral communities are so great that there have been very few attempts to carry out straightforward literacy programmes in them. Persistent efforts to do so have been directed at the major nomadic peoples of the Sahara but it must be admitted that the results seem to have been rather poor.

The farming year is generally divided into "seasons" which are usually quite unlike those of western countries. The work specifically undertaken during each of the seasons in accordance with the classification system prevailing among the peoples living in the region must be described in great detail. Attempts can, of course, be made to estimate agricultural productivity and the time spent on each task but it will soon become clear that these should not be regarded as being of prime importance. We cannot embark here upon a full discussion of the comparison between objective time and the concept of time, or time as it is experienced by the peasant. Agricultural productivity is a concept which is only meaningful in our own western society where farming activities have lost virtually all their socio-religious connotations and have merely retained their economic significance. It is no longer taken for granted, as it was a few decades ago, that it is absolutely necessary to cut away what in western societies is considered to be the dead wood of farming methods. Indeed, some attention is now being given, in the Mediterranean area, to early farming methods that assured the subsistence of large social groups, while limiting as much as possible the effects of erosion. A whole series of minor operations, seemingly trivial but meticulously and carefully supervised, sufficed to protect the soils. It is quite possible that in some countries - and this is already the case throughout the Sahel region - it will prove necessary to go back to what we call "soft technologies" in order, no doubt, to avoid acknowledging our debt to those technologies that are condescendingly described as traditional. It would seem that in Egypt today, the standards for irrigation work are no longer based on the performance of mighty machines of the Aswan dam type but rather on the methods that prevailed in Pharaonic and Ptolemaic times. This should be food for thought and should induce experts to show general respect, though qualified by criticism when necessary, in their attitude to methods that have been over-hastily dismissed as absurd.

The inventory of farming techniques and, more broadly speaking, of agricultural and/or pastoral methods will be accompanied, of course, with an inventory of the plants cultivated and animals raised, showing the differences in "tempo" observed in farming activities depending on the species grown or bred. Thanks to these inventories, it will be possible

to draw up a farming calendar which will be extremely useful precisely because the whole aim of the project will be either to modify the existing calendar or to introduce new activities or new species of plants or animals, possibly with farm equipment that will be quite new to the population concerned. Good examples of such calendars are to be found in the Mali Government's Report produced under the Development Plan for the Ségou District (1974). A chart of this sort looks beautifully simple, but experience has shown that it is a difficult task to prepare one properly. We must not fail to include, in the final document at least, if not in the calendar itself, all the socio-religious customs which surround the various agricultural tasks, together with the major agro-religious festivals held in the course of the year. These festive occasions, often considered by the expert to be time wasted, are, in fact, a vitally important way of using time for social purposes. On the one hand, these festivals enable the community to pay the tribute due to the "mythified" forces which come into play in the farming cycle and, on the other hand, they facilitate indispensable social adjustments. It is during these festivals that accounts are settled and preparations are made for many social acts of great significance such as marriage or initiations, for example. It has often been noted that experts and national officials, apart from attending what are reputed to be the most impressive parts of such festivals, which are also much appreciated by tourists for their "picturesque" aspects, normally refrain from following all their phases and especially those which are less spectacular and are concerned with major transactions between social groups. Yet most of these transactions are not at all secret and, except in very special cases, it is always possible to witness them or to obtain information about them directly from the main participants themselves. It is frequently during these transactions that conflicts with major economic implications are settled or arise, even though the discussions do not focus on what we would regard as strictly economic matters.

It is essential to include in the survey an inventory of the wild plants gathered and the animals and fish caught. In a very large number of communities, these represent a quantity of food which is far from negligeable and, what is more, the activities involved in getting such food often generate intensive social co-operation. In cases where hunting and fishing are collective pursuits, it soon becomes clear that this co-operation is valuable, not only on account of the material benefits derived from such activities, but also for its own sake, because it is a source of intense feelings of fellowship that strengthen social loyalties. Furthermore, the time spent on these activities cannot justifiably be regarded as wasted. It is time devoted to making the social group function and thus to reviving its sense of solidarity, but also its traditional conflicts. The compendium of terms relating to cultivated and wild species of plants and those relating to domesticated or wild animals must obviously include all the terms in the local language. The local language must also be used when listing all the local cultivation and stock-raising methods. This approach will rapidly show that cultivation methods considered as primitive are often, on the contrary, extremely complex even though they may not be impressive. Harold Conklin's book on the farming methods of the Hanunóo in the Philippines, shows what a high degree of sophistication can be reached by rice-growers anxious to make the fullest use of their land, while protecting it from erosion, and intent upon obtaining the maximum yield from all the varieties of rice, vegetables and pimentos that they have carefully selected according to the duration of the specific growth cycle of each variety and the pedological and climatic potentialities of their region. This is not by any means an exceptional example. Unfortunately, in-depth studies of this kind demand a great deal of

time and they are often thought not to be worth while, either because these methods are despised owing to ignorance, or because it has been irrevocably decided to do away with them so as to introduce "modern" cultivation methods. It seems to us, however, that the prudence shown by many non-European countries in matters concerning agronomy and technology should encourage us to be more curious about their remarkable achievements.

The operations mentioned here as if they were carried out successively are conducted, of course, more or less simultaneously. The process of discovering a "fact" is rarely limited to noting the mere existence of the "fact". This is part of a closely-woven pattern from which it cannot be extracted except in an arbitrary way. In other words, while we are trying to describe in detail all the agricultural, pastoral and hunting activities of a community, we are also bound to enquire into the land tenure system, farm management systems and the problems which arise, for instance, when animal husbandry involves medium and long distance transhumant movements.

2. Land ownership

As far as the land tenure system is concerned, we must again refrain from attempting a comparison with western practices even in countries where efforts have been made to introduce them or where they have actually been imposed. In general, there is little likelihood of being able to refer to a cadastral map, except in a few privileged areas (that is, where privileged classes live) situated in towns or nearby. It is therefore necessary to resort to the information that the peasants themselves can supply. Information of this kind is often difficult to obtain, not necessarily because the peasant distrusts the researcher, but mainly on account of the discrepancy in communication levels. In any case, the expert will have to resort to the classification system prevailing among the peoples concerned and he must never try to draw a parallel with our own systems. It is not easy for a city-dweller to understand that a plot of land may belong to one person and the usufruct of this land to someone else, so that a landlord wishing to sell a piece of land cannot disencumber it of the people who till it, for he can never really deprive them of their tenancy rights. Similarly it may seem surprising that a date tree can belong to several people and that this ownership is transmissible indefinitely.

Moreover, the fact that there are no title deeds proving the ownership of land in many countries where research work is to be carried out does not mean that the concept of ownership is vague or inconsistent. Generally, in a peasant society that has kept its structures intact, the property rights of every individual are known to all and any infringement of these rights is noted, commented on and usually rectified by the community as a whole, and in most cases much strong feeling is aroused.

The purpose of our programme is not to solve such problems, but they must be thoroughly understood.

What can and should always be done, if data are not yet available, is to make an estimate of the acreage farmed by each head of family while taking into account, of course, the local measures of area which can always be converted when necessary. This will be done by conducting a sample survey or an exhaustive fact-finding exercise, depending on the size of the region concerned. It is doubtful whether the second method can be used, but an effort must be made to find the time to carry out this kind of work at least in the case of a small community chosen as a representative sample of the population. A good example of this method is to be found in the Malagasy Government's Report on the Farafangana region (1970).

This research will make it possible to estimate the average quantity of farm produce required to support a given social unit, and to pin-point any shortages. It would be preferable to do such research over several years, but that will obviously be impossible. We should therefore try to conduct the enquiry retrospectively, wherever possible, so as to ascertain whether there is a regular cycle of food shortages and good harvests. The notion of cycle exists in many societies and not only for agricultural activities. This is true of societies inhabiting the Sahel or communities living in symbiosis (often through historical necessity) with the desert, which apply a deliberate policy of storing food. Any detailed information on these storage methods would undoubtedly be valuable, as they afford factual evidence that the population is aware of the need to provide for the future, and this can be turned to good account.

There are societies in which it is becoming increasingly difficult to stay on the land because the size of the population is growing fast and holdings are accordingly being perpetually sub-divided. In such cases, allowance must be made for the dwindling of the land capital, which goes with, or brings about, exhaustion of the soil through the direct action of erosion. Clearly, a society in dire distress because of a land tenure problem of this kind is hardly suitable for rural development projects unless, of course, it were decided to remove all obstacles to emigration towards the towns, and this would create another type of problem with equally tragic implications. It is probably for this reason that development programmes are not usually concerned with such regions, which are left, at best, to the care of services implementing straightforward food aid programmes.

In addition to the analysis of the land ownership system, attention must also be paid, of course, to the rules governing inheritance. This leads to the very heart of social relationships, because, as a general rule, the inheriting of land, as well as the buying of land, always arouses strong social feelings.

Fortunately, what has been said of the land tenure system can also be applied to the rules governing inheritance : our programme is not expected to solve such problems, but the expert must understand the human feelings that are likely to be aroused by problems of land ownership.

3. The family

This is the place to mention, without trying to go into detail, the problems associated with the family, since we have referred to rules governing inheritance and because the structure of every society is partly based on a system for handing down either all or most of the personal and landed estate of its members through relations of kinship and marriage.

We must start by losing the habit of thinking of the "nuclear family" as the basic functional unit of any society. The term "nuclear family" or "conjugal family" denotes the social group made up of the father, mother and unmarried children. It is only due to an error, the consequences of which have not yet been overcome in the realm of socio-anthropological analysis, that we are led to think of this unit or "social atom" as being the basis of all other forms of social organization both in non-industrialized societies and in our industrialized societies.

It is self-evident that the differences noted in the manner of regulating the transmission of property through ties of kinship exerts a considerable influence on social structures.

In societies where, for instance, it is the male children who keep the property of the lineage (this being the birthright usually of the eldest but sometimes of the youngest son) and where, as a general rule, the male children remain under their parents' roof, and therefore live with their father, until they get married or even later, social structures undergo far fewer stresses than in societies with matrilinear filiation. In the latter type of society, it is the nephews (or sometimes the nieces, but rarely the nieces alone) who inherit from their maternal uncle, that is to say, from their mother's brother. This system has appeared to be more complicated from a functional point of view, than the system of partilinear filiation, but this is due to our biased approach which makes us find complexity in organizations to which we have not been accustomed from early childhood. However, it is a fact that certain parts of the world, particularly the Arab countries, tend to be strictly patrilinear, whereas almost all of Bantu Africa is strongly matrilinear.

Let us turn now to the case of "matricentric" families. This is a very common form of social organization in the West Indies and the Caribbean, as well as in all the regions of Latin America that have experienced black slavery. It is the mother who is the focal point of the family and not the husband who, in many cases, is not often on the scene. The family's sense of solidarity, in all its aspects, springs from ties of fraternity. It is the group of brothers and sisters that constitutes the backbone of certain Caribbean societies rather than the married couple. For a long time, this form of organization was considered to be particularly pathological from a social point of view. It was the subject of an endless stream of rhetoric from moralists looking for inspiration. It is reasonable to suppose that this sort of organization stems directly from the conditions of slavery, for the reproductive mother was more often kept on the plantations by her master so as to provide him with future slaves, but also to bring up her own children, than the begetter of the children who could be sold if need be. However that may be, this type of organization has outlasted the conditions of slavery even if, in some countries, it is not always taken into consideration by current legislation.

We would not dwell any longer on this question (very fully discussed in Goodenough's work entitled: Description and Comparison in Cultural Anthropology, Chicago, Aldine, 1968), which seems very remote from our concern with literacy work for development purposes, were it not for the fact that we have learnt certain lessons from operations which appeared to be sufficiently well planned to be successful but failed largely because the economic and political decision-making power had not been identified as being vested in the clan (which is the group of persons descending from a common ancestor), so that the projects had relied too heavily on individuals who did not enjoy any prestige in the target community for lack of ties with a clan that enjoyed prestige or was at least well thought of. Sometimes these individuals seem to have been chosen precisely because they were not deeply integrated in the social environment and were therefore thought to be in a better position than others to influence it without having to look after anyone's interests. This reasoning may seem sound provided that we can be sure that the external pressure giving support to these "agents of modernization" will not cease. But when this pressure disappears, then events occur that can be very violent, including even the murdering of these "agents".

It was noticed in Cameroon that many seemingly unsurmountable obstacles could be removed when it was finally discovered that the person who took nearly all the decisions in the village assemblies was an old man who rarely spoke but whose sons were all related by marriage to the illustrious clans of the region to which all decisions had to be referred. It seems that the decision-making process was discovered quite fortuitously. Once the old man had been recognized by the strangers as the only source of authority, although he had never displayed his power, he became the only accepted spokesman of the village - which he had always unquestionably been - and all the "democratic" procedures which the experts considered most likely to produce results quickly and efficiently had to give way to another type of discussion procedure which was neither more nor less democratic than the previous ones but which, in order to obtain the consensus of the social group, had to be set in motion by this highly esteemed old man before it could be regarded as legitimate by the group. This example shows how necessary it is to be acquainted with a community's decision-making processes which frequently, if not always, work through the channels of family ties.

Our purpose in setting out the above considerations, although extremely briefly, is simply to show how difficult it is to carry out this part of an environmental study. We stress yet again - perhaps needlessly - that although this type of information is usually thought to be very remote from our concern with the promotion of literacy as an aid to development, it is in fact highly relevant to our study. As we have already said, it is through this type of structure that the local population reaches the decision whether or not to accept all the proposed literacy and development operations.

4. Irrigation

We shall make a few remarks here about irrigation methods. They are not always very sophisticated, but they can be so in some quite remarkable cases. Before advocating the provision of costly and complicated facilities in this field, inspiration could have been found in local models which could be made more efficient, as suggested by Christian Taillard(1), for instance, by investing quite insignificant amounts of capital and labour. There is surely more hope of awakening an awareness of the need for "modernism" by setting about this sort of project, readily understood by the intended beneficiaries who are acquainted with the principle involved but simply do not have access to a few simple techniques and materials, rather than by trying to launch ambitious programmes for the construction of dams which, in general, rarely get beyond the designing stage. It seems to be simply a matter of common sense. Since our aim is to make people more aware of the improvements they need to make in their farming methods, let us begin with those which are most easily modified because they do not demand any change in social structures or mental attitudes, at least not to begin with.

This kind of description does not, of course, have purely technical implications. We know from the considerable controversy aroused by the notion of an "Asian mode of production" that this type of farming practised over vast acreages can generate a specific pattern of social organization conducive to centralization through the control of the water supply. It is true that such a type of farming creates an extremely strong sense of group solidarity, but it also creates a real threat to its survival in the event of the water supply being disrupted. What we

(1) Christian Taillard: L'irrigation dans le nord du Laos, Mélanges Gourou, 1972.

are interested in, most of all, is to evaluate the strength of the sense of social solidarity which is generated in any case by the use of a well-organized, and therefore efficient, irrigation system.

In the same connection, it is sometimes asked why a given community does not succeed in better controlling its agricultural water supply when it has at its disposal hydraulic resources which are considerable but badly distributed over the year. The aim of irrigation is precisely to regulate this water supply which can be disastrously erratic. In circumstances where it is apparently easy to achieve this, it obviously seems all the more surprising that it has not been done. It is but a short step to draw the conclusion that this is due to some sort of congenital stupidity on the part of illiterate peasants. Yet it might be more illuminating to ask whether the situation is not due, in fact, to a shortage of men and therefore to a shortage of labour. Irrigation works undertaken with traditional equipment, that is to say, without mechanical means other than those operated by men or by animals, are very labour-intensive. Beyond a certain limit, this kind of work becomes physically impossible. On the other hand, the idea of irrigation is certainly familiar to peasant farmers, who are well aware of the advantages which they could derive from such a system. Indeed, they often know what methods would enable them to do so. What they lack is simply the manpower or the necessary funds for buying a Diesel engine, and they know that too! Let us also remember that the problem of irrigation often goes with the problem of drainage. There is either too much water or not enough. Drainage works are undoubtedly easier to undertake than irrigation works but in an area where drainage operations cannot be wisely begun without immediately planning to offset their effects, when necessary, through irrigation, the problem is insoluble and man can do little else than put his faith in the workings of natural forces. But man does not easily resign himself, as we so often mistakenly believe, to enduring the whims of nature, even though he may evolve a philosophy or religion that provides a symbolic explanation of his powerlessness. In some regions of Asia (particularly in South Viet-Nam at the height of the war), some communities in the monsoon areas began to practise irrigation-drainage farming, modelled no doubt on methods used in more experienced neighbouring regions, but without having received any incentive other than the rapid growth in their population which, by dint of necessity, made them turn to effective solutions to their food problems. This, too, should be part of an environmental study. The aim is to discover the latent potentialities which probably exist in all human societies and which must be brought to the fore. An agricultural model taken from a neighbouring civilization because it has proved to be effective can be introduced to the peasant farmers of the society under investigation. It will soon be seen, in fact, that these peasants often have a very detailed knowledge of their neighbours' cultivation methods. One of the difficult parts of the survey is to discover, through a very patient approach, <u>really</u> why the farmers do not adopt these methods.

5. <u>Co-operation</u>

When we find, in a rural society, that a system of co-operation exists in certain agricultural activities, and also in other activities such as the building of houses or religious edifices, this feature clearly deserves our closest attention. As a general rule, such co-operation does not occur at all haphazardly, nor does it involve the whole group at any one time. We must not delude ourselves with the idyllic picture we have of co-operation in Europe, which reflects a tendency to attach a mystical value to the idea of joint effort. The attitude is quite different in the societies where co-operation activities are undertaken as a matter of course. Improvisation is practically absent and everything is scrupulously regulated, even

if we sometimes have difficulty in identifying the intertwined elements that come into play in such activities. The only way of disentangling them and understanding the phenomenon is to examine it very closely with a view to finding out for which types of activity co-operation is mandatory and which activities do not presuppose or even make possible any co-operation. Naturally, a list of the people participating in each co-operative activity will have to be drawn up so as to shed more light on the question. In this way, valuable information will be obtained on the real structure of the social groups under investigation and on the type of response that can be expected. It is always necessary to know, of course, whether the co-operation is of an endogenous or exogenous kind.

Collective work can take on extremely diverse forms, too numerous to describe in detail here. What must be borne in mind, in any case, is the fact that collective work is not necessarily an admirable practice, especially when the social group continues to resort to it when each individual (or rather each head of a household or holding) no longer has the necessary means for meeting his commitments to those who are supposed to come to help him. This system for organizing the work of a social group, in a society which has been disrupted by the impact of modern economics, can be extremely demanding without producing many rewards for anyone except for the social group as a whole. In any case, the performance of collective work is always an extremely important social event, but it is difficult to observe and evaluate accurately.

Collective work can change in form, if not in nature, when an association of peasants accustomed to giving each other a hand, on a rotation basis, becomes a true "society", adopting a hierarchy and obeying fixed rules. In some regions, the formation of such societies may serve as a pretext for setting in motion complicated rank-ordered systems of authority accompanied by sonorous titles. It is not at all an easy matter to try to make an association of this sort into a co-operative in the modern sense of the word. In any case, we must not indulge in facile admiration for such organizations, as some of them are particularly oppressive and often hated by young adults.

6. The role of women

The flaw in many projects, which experts are sometimes conscious of, though not always, is the tendency to underestimate the role played by women in rural societies. There are many reasons for this. More often than not, the experts conducting an environmental study in a rural area are generally men and, as such, have some difficulty in establishing contact with the women's world. In some cases, if they made a determined effort to investigate the real role of women in agricultural work, they might encounter outspoken hostility on the part of the men-folk in the society and have to face trouble. Furthermore, they would thenceforth be denied all possibilities of approaching the women-folk.

The only truly efficient solution to this problem, if we aim (as we should do, in any case) to evaluate with some accuracy the real nature of what is often euphemistically called the complementarity of the sexes, is of course to adopt the rule that at least one woman should always be included in any survey team. If there is no team, a woman should play a very active part in the study at one stage or another. In reality, it should be inconceivable that a survey should ever be conducted by a team which does not consist of an equal number of men and women. What was still a Utopian idea a few years ago is beginning to take shape little by little, and we can look forward to the time when it will be deontologically unthinkable to conduct a single environmental study without the close and well-balanced collaboration both of women and of men experts.

7. Technology

When drawing up an inventory of the material activities of the society under study we must not, of course, overlook any of the tasks connected with handicrafts. In many societies, the working of metals (mainly iron, but also silver, copper, tin, lead and, in very specialized cases, gold) is the preserve of a very small number of specialists who may be either highly respected or despised but are always tolerated.

It is true that some regions of the world are not renowned for their technology. Nevertheless, we should be wary of passing final judgement before we have looked to see whether specimens of seemingly very "primitive" work do not in fact give proof of great skill. This is so, for example, in the case of house-building methods in many areas of south-east Asia. At first sight, we might be tempted to appraise them unfavourably because they are built mainly with vegetable materials and soon acquire, under the effects of the weather, a somewhat dilapidated and forlorn appearance. Yet it is not unusual to come across villages made up of houses which are built on high piles and may be up to a hundred metres long. When we look at them closely, we see that these vast houses, which provide comfortable accommodation for large numbers of people, can be regarded as specimens of particularly intricate wicker-work. From this point of view, they deserve to be admired as technical achievements and should give us some food for thought. It will soon be realized that investigation work in this field is bound to shed light, not only on the symbolism which is generally associated with any building activity, but also on a number of operations which involve calculations and especially the systematic use of methods of bringing measurements into relation with each other. As a general rule, a building, whether it be a religious monument or just a modest house, is not necessarily designed in terms of figures but in terms of ratios between measurements and surfaces.

Furthermore, it is not easy to distinguish those parts of a building which are, in fact, reproductions of traditional models, from those parts which are the result of innovations and so had no precedent to follow. It would be worth while, in the case of innovations, to investigate how the figures or ratios were calculated.

Among other crafts of interest to us here, we would like to draw attention to weaving. This is usually a feminine activity, although in some parts of the Arab world, men alone excel in this craft. Wherever women are engaged in weaving, it should be possible to find fruitful soil for any literacy operation and, in any case, for any operation concerned with arithmetic, for the ridhness and complexity of patterns demand meticulous counting of threads and memorization of the figures throughout the duration of the weaving work. Certain mountain communities of Viet-Nam, which have a bad reputation for their "primitive" ways, have many female weavers in their midst who, with the aid of a rudimentary loom which rests on their loins and whose warp is stretched by their feet, produce blankets decorated with complex patterns involving as many as fifteen rows of heddles. All this requires not only considerable dexterity but also remarkably developed counting abilities. Moreover, modern technology too has its representatives, such as people who can repair bicycles, oil lamps (or perhaps even electric lamps), Diesel engines, lorries, etc.

In short, all the activities that have been outlined have a claim on our attention because of what they reveal about the technological status of a society, the social structures which make them possible and the economic influences that are at work, if only to a minor degree.

Furthermore, they afford evidence of an intellectual activity which can always be turned to good account, provided we take the trouble to evaluate it.

8. Education as an aid to development

One question deserves special attention. What is the attitude of the population - and the local authorities - to education viewed as an aid to development ? This attitude probably depends on the opinion people have of the education given to their children, which is the only form of education that the villagers know of. It must be granted that the village school, as found nearly everywhere in the Third World, is cut off from the realities of its social environment. Furthermore, many parents think of the school as being a place where the children learn to read, write and reckon, although they are not convinced that this can be of much use in everyday life.

Adult education linked to development is a novelty that needs to be explained to villagers, who are rarely familiar with the idea. People in rural communities must be helped to understand the relationship which exists between the adoption of an innovation, such as some new cultivation method, and the fact of acquiring knowledge. The innovation process always involves a learning process. Indeed, to innovate, that is to say, to do something that he did not do before, an individual has to learn something, whether this means selecting more productive varieties, using chemical fertilizers or insecticides, resorting to agricultural credit facilities or participating actively in the running of a co-operative. Herein lies the role of education, at least of development-oriented education.

In every functional literacy project, there is one variable which is all-important, since it determines the workings of the educational process; this is the instructor with his real level of teaching ability and his degree of self-reliance, besides his stock of professional and technical knowledge. In order to prepare a programme of education and training, it is essential to have a precise idea of the desired instructor's profile. Experience has shown that in a functional literacy programme, a wide assortment of instructors are often involved, ranging from the experienced primary school teacher with a sound pedagogical training but often lacking useful technical knowledge, to a villager who is barely literate but is very familiar with relevant technical problems. These are the facts that have to be contended with in the field. It is one of the aims of the environmental study to define the instructor's profile.

. . . . . .

In conclusion, we lay stress once more upon the need to adopt the guiding principle of modesty when we conduct surveys in countries unfamiliar to us. We must make every possible effort not to fall too easily into the trap of ethnocentrism. Let us abide by a golden rule whereby we should always qualify our judgements and, above all, never suggest rank-ordered evaluations concerning the behaviour patterns of our hosts. When we have to make a comparison with our own behaviour, it must be done only in order to draw attention to the existing differences, but never with a view to rating the host community's behaviour patterns according to a scale in which our own feature in a flattering position.

II. HOW TO RECEIVE INFORMATION

A. Books, reports

The first source of information are publications, particularly in the field of economics, sociology or anthropology. Even if they do not discuss the area precisely defined for the development-literacy course, but refer to a larger area, general works on these subjects are very useful to read, as they give an idea about the level of development and the type of social and family structure available.

Besides this type of books - not in all cases to be found in a bookshop, but some of them perhaps having appeared as doctoral dissertations and in many cases only available when one writes to the University concerned - the expert will certainly find a number of official reports, not only from the welfare services (agricultural, veterinary, medical, educative, forestry, etc., but also from the administration of the area. As the development-literacy project is either a government service or it will be taken up by an organization working closely with the government, it will not be difficult to find and study the reports. They do not only show what type of development each service has tried to carry out, but will also show certain problems explaining the reasons why certain plans have failed, or could be executed only to a smaller extent than originally planned. Besides, a curious reader may find reasons among the services themselves why developments have not been carried on, as perhaps in an animal husbandry area certain projects to save a large surface of land proposed by the forestry service were not accepted by the veterinary service. Reading these reports will certainly provide a much better understanding about the area itself, an idea about the willingness of the population to accept innovations, or reasons why it appeared that the innovations could not be accepted, or were, when tried out, of too little use in that part of the country, to propose them seriously.

All this will have to be taken into account when the present plans are being considered. This does not mean that all these reports are the last word in economic thought or sociological or anthropological reasoning.

It is very well possible that an expert may find explanations which he can attack, but this is not the point. The reports show as regards facts and figures the latest available in our area - but nobody guarantees that they are all correct, and work in the course might probably improve them - and the explanations given may perhaps not be the very best, but they show how the service understands the matter, and this will explain its plans and approaches to work. The reading of this material will therefore also show how far the service has gone in their understanding of the problems, and the course will have to take this into consideration.

Therefore, the service reports will show us two things: the facts and figures as collected by the service, as well as the way the service is looking at the situation.

B. Discussions with the Administration and Officers of the Services

1. The Administrator

It is in the previous chapter already discussed what the main subjects should be of our study and what we require to know on the area and its inhabitants. However, these subjects were general, and some of the topics have been found in books or the various reports of the services. In the discussions the experts would undertake with the administrator, service heads of our area, and fieldworkers, one should make one point clear, and this is to jot down during the interview the points of interest and work them out on the same day. Nothing is more unpleasant than to acknowledge that one has in fact not really used what was said during an interview and that one has had "an interesting discussion" but what were precisely the main points?

In the interview we are there to learn about the special topic as seen by the administration or services, we are not there to tell a lot about our own previous experiences in other countries, or elsewhere in the country concerned, unless this might help to grasp better what our interviewee has to say. In a discussion with the administrator (assuming that our area has only one such a functionary) one ought in no case to run off a list of prepared questions, but it is not bad to have thought out first the topics on which further information is needed. Before one would lay down the points, it is clear that one has to know the main features of the administration and the ways in which a service works, but this will be known from the administration and service reports.

From the administrator one would like to know whether he believes that there is any change in the population situation: any change, for instance, in the number of births, or is it not being recorded? What about the death rate, differences between numbers of men and women, important influences due to for the area common diseases in a way that one ought to think about it in the course? Is there a well-known epidemic disease? Perhaps he will refer to the medical service, but he should know whether there are any statistics, and how reliable are they? In any case, would he know whether any family planning takes place, and does he think that this might be a subject of the course, or that it is more important to rely on child care and prevention of epidemics, and how?

In fact, this is a matter perhaps more precisely known by the medical service, but should the general administrator not know about these issues, and is it not worthwhile to compare his views with those of the service? There may be differences and the expert should know in what ways figures are collected.

Another point is the total economic situation. This may be known on the base of "export" figures, or connected with the service buying up agricultural produce, since in a number of countries the government is offering prices perhaps somewhat below the commercial prices, and the government activities in this field will show how far the normal commercial prices are above the government prices. Again, a matter to be checked with the agricultural extension service, in order to find out whether the figures are the same or not. A point usually known particularly to the administrator would refer to the tax proceedings and the figures of the last few years. Increases, decreases and why?

Other sources of income and the number approximately of the population connected with them, e.g. shops, trades, traffic, perhaps tourism including restaurants, hotels, etc., which would probably show how far the local population contributes to restaurant or café incomes which could indicate an increase in local spendable income. All this information would help to assert how far one can speak of an increasing or decreasing local income.

This will lead to a question about the percentage of farmers, their amount of land, differences in land posssession during the last few years, figures of prices of cash and subsistence produce prices, etc. What is the number of landless farmers, do they get work or only at certain times, how do they live if there is no agricultural work, are they helping workers in handicrafts, etc.? An important point is whether there is migration, and if so, only for a few months or is the situation such that people migrate with no idea to return? Or is there immigration on the other hand, and what is the type of work these people are doing?

The administrator will also know about animal husbandry and the role it plays in the total economy. What are his views on efforts of the veterinary service to improve the stock of cattle and to introduce perhaps "new" ones not kept in large numbers until now, like poultry, pigs, rabbits, etc. Again, he may not know the details, but he will have certain ideas about the total economic issue, and would have certain ideas about the successes - or otherwise - of the various services and perhaps underline plans to which he would attach great interest.

A point of great concern is whether he feels that erosion is one of the basic problems. If he agrees, then it is important to know what is being done to acquaint the population more precisely with the efforts to prevent an even worse situation and to see how far our course could collaborate with the forestry service.

A subject particularly in the interest of all commissioners or administrators is the composition of the population of their area: in many cases there will be different groups, either by tribe or religion or dialect or perhaps a certain group has settled after the original population. The point is how do these groups relate to each other. Sometimes one finds in one village even two different religions and language groups and is there a difference in their livelihood? If the language difference is important, it will be necessary to organize different courses. However, sometimes one finds no such differences, but social differences will always exist, sometimes in strict caste differences, sometimes only in matters of property and income. It will be clear that our course should concentrate on the lower part of the total population, so the administrator should be asked particularly about their way of life.

Therefore, the administrator should be asked whether he feels the course is really attempting to help an underprivileged group of the population, and whether the choice of subjects for our literary group is fine, or that some different points should have been stressed. His views on the willingness of the farmers to learn and apply innovations, and what he sees as the specific parts of the population to be interested in this matter, will in most cases be very helpful, although perhaps he sees matters with some pessimism, due to his previous experiences.

A discussion with the administrator will strengthen the experts' feeling of becoming acquainted with the area, since the views of this officer, certainly less detailed as to the particulars of each service's plans and special approaches, have the definite advantage that he, as the general administrator, knows about the activities of <u>all</u> the services in his area, can more or less estimate their impact and provide an overall picture of the total demographic, economic and social aspects of the population.

An important aspect to this discussion - or there may be needed more than one - would be to convince the administrator of the good effect our development-literacy course may have. He may not be terribly convinced of the idea to make adults literate: certainly, the boys and girls should go to school, but all that trouble to make adults literate to be nearly certain that they would not know what to do with all this mental cargo?

There are certainly three answers to give: the general policy of the country is to assure literacy, also for the adult population, so this may be the "official" answer. It should be given, as official policy has to be carried out, and the administrator should be the first man to do so. Nevertheless, it is not very convincing, so we try to point out that in a number of countries in various parts of the world, serious efforts have been carried out to find out the economic advantages of literacy and development education. In this context we might quote a part of the Introduction regarding "Economic Effects" of literacy courses combined with agricultural education to the recently published <u>Research in Adult Literacy</u>:

"In agriculture, where decisions are made by small owners, incredibly high profits can sometimes be made if farmers decide to work "according to the book". In Zambia, for instance, Ahmed found that the normal yield of maize was 4 to 5 bags, but by using fertilizer and doing things "right" no less than 30 to 40 bags were harvested! Chaudhri found a highly significant correlation between fertilizer use and education in India. In Tanzania, Moris found that a farmer attending a first course in literacy and coffee growing could achieve an increase of 100% after 2 years, which clearly indicates a certain level of education.

It is reported from Ethiopia that 66% of the neo-literate farmers doubled their previous yields and 18% produced 50-75% more than usual. They were also delighted to find they could sell their produce more profitably, thanks to their knowledge of arithmetic.

When the Ministry of Education organized a literacy-agriculture survey in India, there was found to be no "relapse" after two years, but the first group of farmers performed marginally better in literacy and agriculture than the second and much better than the third group, who were still attending their course, while the control group came last. Still, it also emerged that the control group was poorer in material possessions.

This latter point was raised by Harker when he studied the influence of education in India and found in one case that standard of living had been left out of the computations. He raises two interesting points: first, it was the literacy not of the farmer (0.22) but of his family (0.64) which "explained" his success; secondly, in Japan, where everybody is educated, it was the use of mass media, including discussions with extension officers, that produced a difference.

We can conclude with Blaug that although progress is certainly possible without literacy it remains within given limits. Beyond a certain point, literacy is needed in order to open the mind to further education." (1)

Finally, the last sentence leads to the third part of our answer: there will be no relapse in literacy knowledge if the farmers, during their course, have been accustomed to reading booklets or brochures issued by the extension services in a language and with pictures easy to understand. It will be the duty of the administrator to see that the services carry on - or start - publishing such leaflets so that a farmer will understand the link between literacy plus numeracy and economic progress, can be reminded easily of the correct measures to use fertilizer for a certain surface of land, the exact way to use it to the farmer's best advantage, and a number of other techniques which a "progessive" farmer is supposed to know.

2. Service Heads

Similarly, we should progress with the discussions with the Service Heads and Field Officers of our district or province. It depends very much as to which part of the development plan belonging to the course will refer to each service, although there is a wide chance of each service being involved.

Here we have, probably more than in the general administration, to deal with a district or provincial head and his local field officers, but the expert(s) will have to discuss the programme of the course with all, especially since local variations have to be taken into consideration, and the course which we should wish to refer to all localities, should endeavour to be so composed that all can benefit from it.

A point of interest in an agricultural innovation usually refers to a more careful method of cultivation which will require more hours of work. Is that reasonably possible, even for one-man plots? If the timetable will require more working hours over a few months - say, more time for ploughing, planting, weeding and perhaps harvesting - is there man-power available? In a number of cases there are landless farmers and their families, who would be glad to have an extra opportunity for work, but in other cases, just because of the strict timetable,

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(1) Research in Adult Literacy, a bibliography, edited by J.D.N. Versluys, and published in 1977 by the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, Teheran, Iran, pp. 13-14. In Chapter VI, Economic Effects, a large number of cases are discussed (pp.147-173).

their help may not be sufficient if indeed all the farmers would join the new type of work. Or is there, on the other hand, a large amount of not or poorly utilized working power, for whom the innovation will provide a very welcome income increase?

If there is a lack of workers for the new method, has one thought of helping one another, a completely normal activity in many cultures, but not everywhere. Or is it possible to invite workers from a neighbouring village whose timetable may not be completely the same as that of the first one? It is clear that some solution has to be found, since in the course questions will certainly be asked on this matter, and there should be an answer.

Another point is how far the service has already found out the willingness - or otherwise - of the village people to accept their innovations. Just one example may serve as discussed by R. Couvert concerning experiences in the Taheza Valley.(1)

The experience was gained while asking groups of farmers whether they understood a set of pictures showing the correct and faulty way of different activities of rice cultivation. First point was whether the pictures as such were correct, and how far the action drawn in each was clear to the group. Interesting to note is, that in some cases the picture was not recognized at all, but even if the main figures were understood (e.g. man in a rice field), one did not recognize his special activity! However, when the present, according to the extension service faulty way of rice planting was shown, every group burst out in applause: that was the way of rice planting! The extension service was not enthusiastic, as the planting distances were far too close, providing, amongst other problems, the difficulty with weeding later on. On the other hand, a picture of the correct way of planting - and easy weeding later - was never selected as being the better way of planting. "One could feel, (alas!) that this poster was a symbol of their present resistance to the demands of SEDEFITA (the extension service) which imposes modern methods of rice growing". (p. 65)

Here one feels that "modern methods" require not only (in most cases) more time and more money, but that one has, on top of this, to overcome a natural resistance as to interfere with the customary methods of rice cultivation.

It may be useful to underline again that any innovation will bring about changes in the economic, social and financial situation which means that it is worthwhile to find out, if possible previous to introducing any, the consequences to be expected.

Are the financial problems to be solved in such a way that the small farmers could also benefit? If new techniques are needed, requiring usually more working hours, has one thought of a solution benefiting the landless labourers, which means that ready money can be made available, since a credit system will be needed? And would the new technique, probably against the customary system, hurt any traditional habit?

For instance, in Java women were the planters of the rice stalks - as in them the system of fertility was seated —but, suppose that more manpower would be required, could one ask men to join the planting labour?

As Couvert remarked about the with great joy by a village recognized erroneous system of rice planting in Madagascar, the happy recognition showed that the Taheza Valley population was not psychologically prepared for the innovation, a task to be carried out by our course.

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(1) R. Couvert, "Testing a Series of 13 Posters in the Taheza Valley", Literacy Discussions, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1971), pp.51-70.

3. Field Officers

Finally, the expert(s) should also discuss the particular duties and experiences with the field officers. They are very close to village life, but one cannot yet conclude that they are themselves immediately connected with all the villages in our area, since a field officer would probably live in a small town and serve several villages in the vicinity. However, they know personally the village chiefs and other influential people. They would be able to give the name of people who play a role in their work, perhaps as "contact farmers", or people who have shown interest in innovations and would probably be helpful to the course. They will also know whether there are to be expected certain resistances, e.g. in the field of soil protection and the fight against erosion, or problems of stock improvement in animal husbandry, how far in certain villages as regards the natural situation and good transport facilities there may be a chance for milk production, and how far local farmers would wish to take a chance in this field. And finally and most importantly: have they tried out themselves whether the new method or seed will indeed have the proposed favourable results in their area?

The medical service could enumerate certain villages where they have good contacts, others where penetration is difficult, probably due to strong influences of the village healer.

It would then be interesting to see how far the ideas of these field workers from different services would coincide: are there indeed some villages where innovations in various aspects of development would all receive a favourable acceptance?

Besides, there is another group of persons who might be able to tell us a great deal about the population: the missionaries. It is well known that the mission has entertained long relationships with the "humble villagers". The missionaries have the advantage that they come from outside and had therefore the same difficulty to surmount like the experts in understanding the mentality of the villagers. Not being government servants, they might have different views on the situation. Living often for many years in the area, they have a good chance of knowing it and their population well, and are usually well acquainted with the language. It is well known that in a number of cases the first studies of the language have been made by missionaries, and they often maintain a set of publications in that language. From their long acquaintance they are well versed in the social structure, know - from their own experience - how difficult it may be to introduce new ideas, and might be able to find ways and means to help in our literacy projects which they have pursued - perhaps in a different way - for a long time. So contacts with missionaries will certainly be very helpful to achieve a better idea of the population and their structure.

It will also be useful to get in touch with salesmen of agricultural implements, fertilizers and means of crop protection. They also try to bring about interest in a new area of agriculture. What are their experiences? In some cases they will have shown the advantages of their products by comparing their yields with the usual ones. Did it have any effect? Do they have an idea about the groups of farmers who are interested? What can they tell about credit for farmers? Is the production relatively good or poor in our area, and why? They may be able to give useful ideas as how the approach in our course should be to enhance - or change - the production. It is also their aim to reach the same purpose, so their co-operation seems granted. They may also have their rate of response in many villages.

In a number of cases this can be expected, and may be due to a village headman who is not afraid of innovations, and when the villagers see that these new things do really provide advantages, one is much more easily prepared to try how far something new proposed by a different service would prove equally useful.

The author found this in various parts of Asia, e.g. in community project villages (India), or in Sri Lanka and Burma. As a matter of an example it may be of interest to quote the improvements that have occurred to a village in Sri Lanka which were not all due to the influence of any particular service, but to the initiatives of the villagers themselves: not only improved methods of cultivation, but also increased security, adult education classes, new roads, the improved temple, a weaving centre, etc.

Another example was found in Burma, where there was a great difference between a village - Dayebo - having a social welfare officer who established an active social welfare society, and another village - Onegone - indeed about half the size of Dayebo, not having these advantages - Dayebo got electricity, but no one in Onegone would wish to pay the amount needed for 1½ miles of line connections, so Dayebo could apply for and got three tube wells and bought a water pump. But it also set up a community centre, paved its village roads, got a football field, established a dispensary, after they had set up a school, and took care to cleaning regularly the village pond.(1)

C. Map

It would be helpful to lay down on a map the "quality" of the various villages as recorded by the field officers from different services as regards their performance - or otherwise - in accepting innovations, or at least in showing interest in them, indicating, for instance, with -5 to +5 going from utter lack of interest to definitely applying innovations.

It will be certainly very helpful to know the reasons why the interest exists (or does not show) so that one can gradually discover, without having been to any village yet, how they appear to be in the eyes of field workers, each having his special task, but all working in the common field of development. How far is there a common judgement among the field officers, and how far do they indicate the same reason for success or failure?

This map will be the skeleton of our village survey, should also indicate the estimated number of inhabitants, the agricultural development plan, possibly the spread of different groups of population, languages or religion, and whatever should be added to provide a useful map, equally useful for the evaluation of the area for which this study is the actual beginning, as it shows the situation "before" the programme is being executed.

III. VILLAGE VISITS

A. The Area and the Quick Survey Method

How many villages should one visit as a team of experts, to discover village life? If possible one should go to all the villages situated in the area where a development-literacy course is going to be set up. Sometimes one is required to make a pilot study with perhaps only 10-12 villages, but it is not unusual that a district or a province has been indicated. However, no government would usually design finance and manpower to a, as far as this country is concerned, completely new type of approach, and although the combination of agricultural development and literacy has been tried in a number of countries - and an evaluation of these.

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(1) More details in "Some Notes on the Social and Economic Effects of Rural Electrification in Burma" by J.D.N. Versluys, published in Journal of Asian and African Studies, Vol. I, No. 3 (July 1966), pp. 220-236.

efforts has been published[1] - it is very clear that a government would first see how this method works in a relatively small part of the country as a trial.

In this context one has to realize that the technical (agricultural) part of the development plan is costly and should benefit as quickly as possible.

This requires timely and full attention paid to the preparation of the farmers and their wives. They themselves will also be far more easily motivated to join a course to prepare them for changes which - as everybody rightly believes - will prove to become economic betterment of the area and of themselves, even only indirectly in the case of landless labourers, craftsmen and shopkeepers.

One would underline, therefore, that the study should take place at about two to three years before the "investment" can start to be used. This means that a course will usually take two years, preceded by our study taking in most cases probably about three months and three months are then available for preparing the first part of the course, as well as for selecting and training the teachers.

If one wants to prepare the first part of the course and have it multiplied so that one can start with teachers who should have had the first part of this training - again a matter of about four weeks - which may also show that certain parts should be reworded or perhaps be redone, then it is clear that an estimate of starting the study six months or one year before the course should begin (or 2½ to 3 years before the first batch has completed their study) would seem to be a good estimate.

The present guide would strongly recommend to each team of experts to visit all the villages where a course is planned to be opened, at least when no more than about 20 villages are designed. However, it may be that the government feels that a trial at a district or province level would be better to gain a clearer picture on a larger scale.

If one agrees that agricultural development on an acceptable level. which means that, with literacy one or more innovations that are meant to improve the produce can be carried out by the service(s) concerned on such a large scale, all the better. But if the whole of the country will gradually benefit by such a plan, it is understandable that a project requiring a tremendous investment, cannot usually involve more than 100 or 200 villages as a start.

Nevertheless, these villages, including therefore from 50,000 to 400,000 inhabitants according to the size of the villages, would not mean so many participants, since in our initial study, we are not yet aware how many there will be per village, as this depends partly on the rate of literacy, but also on the attraction of the programme. We shall first have to deal with villages, later on with the participants, but not in the present study.

If indeed 100 or 200 villages are involved, or even more, what is going to be the rate of visiting them?

In order to devote reasonable time to each village, one could accept that a village requires two days on the average, after one has discussed the broad lines with the administrator(s) and service chiefs at the area level. This would mean that plans have been discussed, and that the broad lines are fixed, although certain modifications are still possible. The visits to the villages will also serve to

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(1) Unesco Secretariat, Experimental World Literacy Programme: Report and Synthesis of Evaluation, Unesco, 1975 (Paper prepared for the Persepolis International Symposium for Literacy, September 1975).

finalize the development plans and the details of the contents of the course, besides making acquaintance with the village people.

For our Quick Survey Method a visit to 20 villages is generally sufficient, so one has to decide on a sample. Here we have to use the information already collected from the administrator and the service personnel. It should also be clear if there is one type of innovation for all the villages, or that one has decided, on the basis of the soil and height of certain villages, that a particular crop will have excellent chances in a number of villages, but that one has to propagate a different innovation in the other parts. The selection of the villages will depend on a set of various considerations.

If the plan indicates that a food crop, say, rice cultivation, should be improved, one takes a sample on the basis of the area to be served with this particular innovation. If in another part of the area the cultivation of a cash crop, perhaps tobacco, is the aim of the plan, it is clear that a sample of the tobacco villages should be visited.

If a map has been established as suggested at the end of the previous chapter, then we know already what the main features are of the development plans of the agricultural service. We also find that certain villages are generally high up in response, others rather down. There are also some villages - probably rather a minority - showing a "good" grade from one or two services, but the opposite from another. Again, judging from experience, the forestry service will have indicated bad response in most cases.

In selecting our villages one should take into consideration first the type of project as well as the response received by the services. Another point is the group of people living in a certain area. In a number of countries there are different tribal links, which in various cases would also be demonstrated in a different language, or perhaps dialect. Here is work for the linguist: can the whole course be given in one language understood by all participants and propagated by the government as the official language, at least for our area, or are the differences too great?

In certain cases there will be some differences in pronunciation and probably different words for agricultural tools. These of course are to be noted and should be used when the cultivating techniques are discussed. However, these details - of great importance - have to be clarified by experts, taking into consideration the general language policy of the government.

The difference in tribes is not only one of language, but there may be differences in the social structure and the living customs of families: e.g. in a certain tribe nuclear families may be prevalent whereas in another the joint family may be the rule. This makes, as we already saw, very often a difference as regards the question who is the man who takes the decision of joining the course. Even if the head of a family may not participate in a course, he should be in agreement with its general purpose, since otherwise very few changes would be carried out by the younger members of the family.

In the previous example we have mentioned a rice and a tobacco course, while it would be very useful to compose a course for farm women as well. If luck is against us, it may be necessary to use more than one language, but one has to prepare in most cases for at least three different courses. Nevertheless, one should plan to keep the number of courses to a minimum: to prepare a separate course not only requires much time and effort, but is also a disadvantage in the training of teaching personnel. Finally, the more courses are specialized, the fewer becomes the number of future participants.

Again using our map, we should indicate the various particularities of villages and the two or three (or perhaps one) plan we are dealing with, and see how everything would fit. The idea is to establish "clusters", villages which combine the characteristics of largely one tribe, one plan, one rate of response and one language which would be worthwhile visiting. Visiting some of such villages will give an indication as to how far the course would be acceptable and also give and idea as to how many participants one approximately could expect. Clearly. the more variations one has, the more clusters we have to deal with, since one has to think in squares of two of each cluster, assuming that only two possibilities are available for each characteristic. Therefore, with three different characteristics one should recognize eight clusters, and sixteen if there are four characteristics, while there are thirty-two different possibilities, if there are five characteristics, adding perhaps small and large size of a village.(1)

However, with the help of our map and what we already know from the area, we shall be able to use the Quick Survey Method which is meant to achieve a summary of information, if the data per individual farmer are not the purpose, but only those of groups.

Moreover, our initial investigation would serve to get us acquainted with the area and its inhabitants in general, and more particularly with their reactions to the development plan and participation in a course, emphasizing this aspect as well as literacy.

This method is not the same as simple interviewing on the basis of a fixed questionnaire: the latter provides a comparable picture of each interviewee and one has to do this in order to know a number of features of each individual.

For instance, interviewing of each participant, particularly as regards matters to be taught in the course, will be necessary later on, in order to know their level of knowledge and personal abilities and customs. Our present type of enquiry on the contrary, will serve as the first level evaluation, serving to show if, and where, the course will have any influence, and providing information on the present level of production.

Therefore, the present investigation does not require individual participation, as the villages should first be designated, and then various people in the village should inform the experts in a free interview, to gain a broad, village-wide impression.

What villages should be selected if there are three points to be taken into consideration, e.g. two types of development plans, two different tribes (probably not speaking altogether the same language), and a good and poor response. First we have to consider the difference in plans: as improved rice production would require a very different approach from a tobacco production, we have to acknowledge this variation. However, we are not yet sure whether the tribe difference would make a very big difference in our programme, except probably linguistic ones if there are differences in the language. But what is interesting is the difference between a good and poor response between the first and second group of village. So we take from the first tribe a good and a bad rate response village, as we would do also from the second.

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(1) Since each cluster has two characteristics, each allowing two possibilities, one has to think of 4 possible connections; if R1 would indicate a good and R2 a poor response, coming from P1 (rice plan) and P2 (plan tobacco), one has to make 4 connections to have all these features combined. Similarly, if there are 3 characteristics (Plan, Rate and Languages), one has 1 + 3 + 3 + 1 = 8 different combinations, etc.

Let us make clear which villages we select, making clusters with Plan (P1 = rice, P2 = tobacco). Tribe (T1 is one tribe and perhaps a language and/or religion variation, while T2 is the other), and Rate (R1 means good, R2 is poor response). All the variations are therefore as follows:

(1)	P1	T1	R1
	P1	T2	R1
(2)	P1	T1	R2
	P1	T2	R2
	2	T1	R1
(3)	P2	T2	R1
	P2	T1	R2
(4)	P2	T2	R2

This is the theoretical combination, but from our map we might conclude that all of them do not exist. It may occur that the rice plan (P1) is not going to be introduced in any T2 area, as perhaps soil or water facilities would not fit. Even if they do fit into both tribal areas, then we can start with two T1 areas, one with a good and the other with poor response to the acceptance of innovations. If we select the combinations (1), (2), (3) and (4), then we have studied two P1 and P2 villages, two T1 and two T2 tribes and two good and poor response villages. We have not selected all possible combinations, but enough to understand the 3 x 2 different positions, since the work on a plan can be studied with a good and poor response, and in respect of the tribe differences.

In a number of cases we understand that in a single village both the rice and the tobacco plan will be carried out, but that would not be a problem, which may be so if two tribes are living together. Would or would it not be wise to have one course for the two groups of population? Again, is it sensible to have separate classes for women, or is the programme so to be designed that only farmers' problems should be discussed, and not those of farmers' wives? Another point is the R1/2 issue, as it is quite possible that either the services field personnel were not in agreement, or they may be, but replied that the village was not really showing "good" or "poor" responses, thus leaving open the question.

We have until now selected 4 villages which will have to be multiplied if we are dealing with 100 or 200 villages. How many should be visited? As we are dealing with cluster villages, one should take into account how the variations are divided over, let us say, 200 villages. It can be that about 60 villages should receive a rice course, and 140 either a combined or a purely tobacco course. So, the P1 and P2 should be in a 1:2 proportion approximately. One should also find out how T1 and T2 are proportioned, as well as the good and poor rate responses. Since for our purpose it would seem reasonable to accept a 1:10 proportion, then we should select 20 villages in the proportion just mentioned to have a decent survey. However, if one hears every time quite new stories about cultivation, social structure, economical prospects and language use, not to talk about family organization, then a more frequent visiting round is indicated.

B. How to proceed in a village

1. The first day

It is necessary to warn the head of a village through appropriate administrative contacts a few days in advance about the planned date of our visit of two days, indicating also to discuss the course on the first day in a public meeting. Whether it is best to have men and women together or not, should be locally decided, and will also depend on the proposed programme.

When arriving at a village, certainly when one is not accompanied by an inhabitant of the village - to whom clearly the local initiative should be left entirely - the expert(s) should immediately go to the chief or headman of the village and check the meeting(s) requested for the first day. One should also ask for records probably held by the headman and compare his information with what one has received previously. The first day is of importance, as in the private discussions one can refer, on the second day, to what was discussed and so save a lot of time, which would be needed to explain what the course wants to achieve.

However, with the headman - and perhaps some of the other influential villages he may have invited for the occasion - one has to give a clear idea as to what the course should do, how perhaps similar courses in other villages were conducted, and what was the result. One has of course to verify whether the information as regards the groups living here, their language, the plans to be executed do really fit with the situation, and would also like to hear more about the good (poor) results as reported by the various services. If a service reported poor results, the probability is very great that the headman will give a slashing report about all the mistakes made by the service officers not arriving at the time indicated, they promised fertilizer reduced in price, but fertilizer, at whatever price, was nowhere to be found; some people who, after all, had tried to produce tobacco, could never find a suitable market and were obliged to sell their produce at a ridiculous price to a local shopkeeper, etc. All this will be repeated by the other farmers, so the bad results as reported by the service are, according to the villagers, nothing but touching the service itself. Such things may happen, so one poor report on a village may not be the fault of the villagers, or probably there will be mistakes on both sides.

The matter would require a more solid investigation if <u>all</u> services dealing with a village would report about poor reactions. Then there is probably some difficulty and it may not be possibe to find out at a first visit what is the real problem. There may be several difficulties, e.g. the position of the headman is uncertain so that whatever he proposes would not be accepted by a large part of the village people, or there may be a long-standing strife between two or more groups in the village which would practically condemn anything new, since if one party would accept it the other would fight against it. There may also be a sort of traditional complete inactivity in the village which would never accept anything beyond the customary pattern of village life.

It should be made clear that the organization of a course is just as much a matter of the villagers as of the "outsiders", the organizer, experts or any representative of the course. If the headman shows no interest at all, if he has probably "forgotten" to convey a meeting where one could inform the villagers on the advantages of a course - or if practically nobody turns up - then it is wise to postpone opening a course in that village, unless one has heard from other influential (and simple) villagers that the negative attitude is particularly the headman's problem and has little to do with the village as such.

But let us suppose that the village chief would show - as is fortunately still the custom - a hearty welcome to the course, what can we derive for information useful for our purpose? A great deal, since if things are well, the headman knows about practically everything. So the progress of innovations, a sufficient knowledge of the general literacy level, the problems connected with applying innovations, what difficulties small farmers would have, whether the results of previous innovations are indeed as strong or weak as related by the service concerned, how far transport and markets exist, how easy or difficult it is to get credit, etc.

In this discussion it will be possible to get some further remarks about the various services with the village: Are there definite arrangements, e.g. a nurse may come every Monday and does she come? Is there a group of - or perhaps one -

"contact persons" for the agricultural or veterinary service and does this help? Does any service ever use the radio for announcements or information? Do they provide brochures on an innovation they want to introduce? Are the innovations physically possible as regards the water, soil and climatic situation, etc.? Here is also a man who, from his experience and position of leadership, may make useful suggestions as to what information the course should provide.

It may be also very useful to discuss with the headman whether he believes that the teacher, an extension "contact man", or perhaps somebody else may be the best instructor for the course.

In this context one can probably consider more closely the role of the "contact persons" many extension officers have created in various villages to become the teachers of the rural development groups. Much depends, of course, in what way such a contact farmer has been requested to join the extension work. Very often it may be a rich farmer, perhaps a few in larger villages who, more or less automatically, have shown interest, would offer their land for demonstrations, would themselves try to cultivate cash crops where this is a new enterprise. or apply other innovations. The other farmers go there if they would hear themselves something new as it is impossible for any field officer to make contact with every farmer. Therefore, what started perhaps accidentally will soon develop as a natural development of the service.

It may be better to follow more closely the Ethiopian example as described by R.O. Niehoff(1), where the Government of Ethiopia - SIDA project - is described. One clear point is that one does not select the rich farmers, but rather those who have about an average plot and would be willing to work as "model farmers": open to new ideas, wanting to show their work and results, and being elected by about 100 other farmers. The advantages for the "model farmer" should not be neglected: all that is needed for this innovation, like seed, fertilizer, herbicide, tools, etc. are given to him. However, he has to apply the innovations in the correct way, has to keep records. He is also a member of a village committee which reviews requests for credit from other farmers, a responsible task since no further credit is given to a village where there are more than 10% of arrears.

As there are no more than 15 or 20 model farmers working with one officer, the contact with the service is very close. The Agency also takes care of the necessary training of model farmers, as well as of that of women who work in home economics, including home skills, literacy and kitchen gardening. If such contact persons exist, what are the views of the village head on this matter?

Finally, his reactions would be useful to note when the idea of establishing a village association to support the course may be brought forward. Such an association may look after the place where the sessions should be held, see that lamps, a school board, seats, etc. are available, may make propaganda and, where necessary, help participants by perhaps modifying working hours, could certainly ascertain which months and times for a course are most appropriate, finding also out how the women would most easily participate, and probably a lot more.

However, the principal purpose would obviously be to integrate the course into village life.

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(1) Non-formal education in Ethiopia, Michigan State University, 1974. An outline of the chapter concerned can be found in Research in Adult Literacy, edited by J.D.N. Versluys and published by the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, 1977, pp. 165-167. This book can be ordered by writing to this Institute, P.O. Box 1555, Teheran, Iran.

Before leaving the headman, one would like to know which groups there are in the village: different tribes - or castes - richer, average and poor farmers, and what surface of land belongs to each category, how many animals, special matters of family structure, the role of traders, artisans and landless labourers, as well as the chance of each category to be interested in a course.

Now it is about time to have our discussion with the village teacher. He nor the educational service has been mentioned very much, since in most cases contacts with the Ministry of Education may have been very frequent, so it is probable that the information available on our area will have been provided by this Ministry. Nor has the school administrator been mentioned, since unfortunately the school and educational services are always regarded as something for children. The time has not yet come that educational services would feel it to be their duty to look after adults as much as after children.

Nevertheless, the advice of the village teacher is obviously important. The school often shows how important educational matters are regarded in a village: when the exterior of the building looks well, there is a good chance that the inside will be visited by nearly all the children. A discussion with the teachers - or one of them, possibly the headmaster - will show how far the parents use the right (as it has been established in nearly all developing countries) to send their children to school without any fee.

The rate of children going to school as compared to all those who should go will give an indication as to how education is appreciated. Important is also to find out whether there is any difference between boys' and girls' rates.

Another point is obviously the drop-out. The educational literature concerning developing countries is full of a very large rate in the second form (often about 30%), which after the first year rapidly continues, quite often losing 2/3 of the first year once the last of six school years has arrived(1). This part is extremely important, as it will show how far children having gone to school would be really "literate" in the full sense, namely, that they can - and do - use their knowledge particularly in reading, but also in writing and especially in arithmetics.

Suppose one finds that about 2/3 of the school capacity is wasted by drop-out, what reason does a teacher give? Is there any job to be done for boys and for girls? Certainly, there will be, but are they so important that their help cannot be missed in farm or household? This point is of great interest as it will probably indicate the weight given to education, which will not be confined to children's education.

Also with the teacher - and on the basis of his figures of absence - will it be helpful to discuss the months and times of the course, as well as the possibility, perhaps not the best one - to have the course organized in the school building. For many adults the way to school is psychologically not easy, and if they have to sit on benches made for small children, they may feel all the unhappier. But is there a community centre, or any public place better than the school?

The teacher will also know how far absent children come from a special category of households: perhaps the small farmers who need their boys to help on the land, or may help others in order to earn money. Maybe that the chances are better for richer children as their fathers have to hire labourers in any case. However,

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(1) UN Economic Commission for Africa, An Evaluation Study of Unemployment and Underemployment Among School Leavers, Addis Ababa, 1972, estimates the wastage due to drop-out at 66% from primary schools, a figure also found in a previous Unesco study.

the purpose of the course should be the poorer part of the population. Could that be arranged? Suppose that, as it often happens, there are some months without any rain, would it be feasible to organize full day courses instead of 1½ or 2 hours in the evening?(1)

Another point - already mentioned previously - is what the present way of teaching actually tries to achieve. Besides literacy and arithmetics, is there a certain direction in the teaching, does a boy or girl learn anything that can be used at home? Of course, it is not our duty to reform primary education, but if more education "ready for use" should be provided, this would show great help in our literacy and development course, while also the teacher himself should be much more ready to leading an adult course, although a good training should obviously be needed.

Perhaps the teacher would have an idea about the rate of adult literacy, and he would know what to expect of children having completed the school. Is there a supply of reading material coming from services? Do newspapers arrive, and how is the distribution? How far has radio progressed? Are there books to be found in any shop, or comics? Some schools have small libraries, and the teacher would know what type of books are particularly liked, also by the adults. This may be a reason to adjust the course to that pattern. Quite a different point is the understanding of pictures. Does he have any idea whether pictures are understood by illiterates, and if so, which ones?

Another problem is the knowledge - or lack of it - with illiterates. Do they know how to read prices? If they pay, do they know what change they should receive? This can be found out by a visit to the market or a shop.

However, the visits to the village headman as to perhaps two or three other influential men, the teacher and going to the market should leave enough time to go to the meeting where it will be necessary to explain to the villagers what type of course it is. Not just literacy, not a farming course, but both combined. It is clearly necessary that the explanation is given by somebody who knows the local language well, and that there should be plenty of opportunities to ask questions or make remarks.

It would be extremely helpful if in such a discussion the expert would be able to make it clear how many lessons one would require to understand a simple text. If one can give the answers - perhaps not being 100% accurate but relying on experience from a similar course - it would be helpful to give certain time limits, as the audience would like to be as sure as possible. Information about the agricultural course and arithmetic should, of course, also be given.

Certain investigators feel that it is necessary to note down the number and type of remarks received at a meeting, just to see what part of the discussion would draw the greatest interest. In any case, it would be very useful to note down the main remarks made, also separately by males and females. A comparison of the remarks made would finally show the way in which the course should proceed to fulfil the expectations. Towards the end of the meeting one should ask how many persons (men and women) would probably attend the course, not yet asking a definite answer, but just to see whether there would be any or even a substantial interest.

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(1) G.A. Smith, "A Micro-Study of Rural Illiteracy", Literacy Discussions, 1970, No. 3, pp. 146-152. The slack agricultural season between May and October made this possible. Full-time courses would also avoid the lighting problem in the evening. Moreover, the results are much quicker available than in evening courses of perhaps one or two hours only.

Here again one should discuss the months and hours of the course. If there are little differences between the replies given, then it is not necessary to mention the subject again in individual information.

This point should be stressed: as soon as concerning a certain issue agreement exists, when asked from people of various background, then it is not necessary to continue questioning more people. Here we want to know certain facts, but it is a different matter when one asks about opinions. Then one has to identify the person who replies, whether man or woman, age, farmer (rich, average, poor), landless labourer, trader, etc. Opinions asked in other villages may reflect about the same opinion of people of similar nature which would make us conclude that it is quite possible that certain opinions are held by persons showing the same status in life.

2. The second day

On the day of the meeting we have already received some useful information as interest in the course. The second day we would spend largely in finding out whether it is already possible to make an estimate of the future number of participants. In this matter it is of great importance to note also the replies of girls and women which means that a woman investigator should be available.

Of course, one is not only asking whether he or she is planning to join. The combined efforts of the headman and the teacher should be able to give us at least a fair idea about the number of illiterates in the village: usually the poorer groups provide the bigger part, and far more women than men. This means that in most cases it will not be necessary to contact richer farmers, since they are literate and will have started the innovation already.

Since traders and handicraftsmen do not work the land (and they may also be literate), the group of future participants is in most cases confined to the smaller farmers and the labourers, and the women belonging to those groups. However, that does not diminish the total number of contacts very much, as the literate groups, not belonging to average and small farmers and labourers are not very numerous in most cases. As regards the replies from women, in a great number of cultures they will be given only to a woman interviewer, but not in all. It does happen that the woman respondent will be in the home surrounded by father and brothers if she is a girl, and by her husband and probably his brothers to give the answers as seen fit by the males. Nevertheless, even so it must strengthen the women's feelings that their opinion - or what goes for it - is being asked.

The Quick Survey Method would be concentrated on obtaining answers to provide a general knowledge of village life, so as to enable the project to draw up a suitable teaching programme. How many persons should be approached to achieve a decent coverage of a village? As pointed out before: we are dealing with illiterates, therefore, the discussions with the teacher and the head of the village, also perhaps with a health visitor or a nurse on the first day, with whatever one has found out at the village meeting, should give us an idea about the approximate percentage of illiterates, men and women, while the number of participants at the meeting gives an idea of the village interest in the course.

Probably many youngsters, although having gone to school for one or two years, are not very far off again from illiteracy.

The point is that our discussions on the second day should give us an idea about what small farmers and landless labourers, their wives and young boys and girls (14 and older) are actually doing as their daily work. So one has to discuss their farming work. Are any changes taking place? Would they be willing to attempt innovations? Would they feel that changing to a cash crop would be advantageous?

How far are they at liberty to change farming habits or have they to discuss it with family heads? Who are they? Would they be willing to ask for credit and have they received previously any agricultural credit? Is it easy to sell their produce?

These questions and probably some others as the case may be, should be asked of small and "average" farmers, at least if they are illiterate or have some difficulty in reading, writing and arithmetic. Another point is whether they use labour, how long, and what do they pay? It is not impossible that the new method would require a more labour-intensive approach. Would they be willing to do so?

The replies received from small farmers regarding their chance of getting anything from the agricultural programme will usually be pessimistic. This was definitely the case when in India the Community Projects had started and an inquiry was made somewhat later. The small farmers thought that it was fine for the big owners, but that they, with their lack of land, tools, draft cattle and, of course, credit, could not expect very much. This result was also expressed by the landless labourers.(1)

However, the situation is not that bad. A study in the Philippines shows that regarding the adoption of high yielding rice varieties (HYV) no fewer than 95% of the farmers in the barrios had adopted it, while also a similar study showed that neither in the Indian nor in the Pakistan Punjab regarding the adoption of HYV the farm size had been a serious constraint. Moreover, this adoption has also resulted in an increase in the demand for labour, so landless labourers would also benefit.(2)

In general, one should not ask too many questions of one person as it is important that he/she should like to reply. So, half an hour or a little more, is usually sufficient. As we have no fixed questionnaire, it is quite possible to emphasize more one point in one interview and another issue in the next.

The questions asked from landless workers are usually more simple. They have no personal responsibility for any piece of land (unless of course they can rent land) and will usually be paid per day. How do they live if there is no farming work? What do farmers pay, and what about other types of work? Do they always stay in the village, or do they go elsewhere to earn something? Are they feeling that this programme is also useful for their group of people? As we saw, it will.

The number of interviews should be in line with the number of illiterates and their various groups (male, female, young boys and girls, "average" and small farmers, landless labourers) as given by the head of the village and others met on the first day. If there is a woman among the group of experts, her help is certainly necessary. If there is none, then the experts (let us say the expert on evaluation, an agricultural expert and probably also the educator) should be strengthened by a lady investigator.

It is clear that she should have had all the information from reports and discussions already described and should have the habit of interviewing: perhaps a social science student in her last year, or a social worker, sometimes a health visitor, but she should have had a daily habit of discussing matters with village people, and, of course, knowing the dialect or language of the area concerned.

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(1) Community Projects - First Reactions by the Programme Evaluation Organization, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, 1954. The labourers replied (75 out of 112), when asked: "Who will be least helped by the Community Projects?", "The labourers". Not one mentioned the bigger agriculturalists.

(2) Vernon W. Rutten, "The Green Revolution: Seven Generalizations", International Development Review, No. 4, 1977, pp. 16-23.

When one takes it that the team exists of three persons, then it is quite possible, with the help of the head of the village, to arrange for 8 to 10 interviews per person, quite often strengthened by remarks from other people joining the discussions as everybody knows that it happens in villages. So the number of interviews will be 25 to 30 per village which will give us quite a useful picture of the situation.

One point should be underlined, and that is the problem of interpretation. This is obviously needed for international experts, but not seldom also for the national ones as it is very often a language or dialect not known or not well known to them. It requires a training for an interpreter to serve well: he should understand the type of questions and not being led to quite different points as brought up by the respondent, unless this would help the discussion. One should prepare this matter, as it is not a simple point.

When discussing the course, one should give a try to each prospective customer to discuss with him or her what he/she feels about the programme. As pointed out earlier, in a number of cases the main features have been agreed between the service and the administration, but a number of details could probably be filled up.

In order to invite further comments one could ask whether the programme looks useful, or how it should be changed to be of greater effect. Another point is whether the link between literacy, arithmetic and farming, or in female interviews: problems of nutrition, household work, medicine, family planning (a subject to be discussed not in the open, but at home) is really clear, and, if so, how far one believes that for "persons of this village" it would be a useful programme.

What does the respondent think about a village association for a development course?

In general, the question asked by a stranger: "Would you join this programme?" may be too direct. Only if he has agreed that the programme is good for the village, one may ask whether he (or she) would wish to join.

However, there may be objections. It is usually the time which is lacking. Clearly, even if one feels that there is nothing much in it for myself, politeness dictates that it is only a matter of lack of time. Nevertheless, this factor, particularly with women, often also helping on the farm, bound by sometimes long walks to find good drinking water, also feeling obliged to let her girls go to school, this time factor may be very real.

It will depend on the time available and whether the answers come fairly quickly to be sure that one could carry out a type of inquiry about the level of arithmetic as well of general handling of basic logic and finally the recognition of different types of pictures.

This refers to two tests carried out by Dr. A. Fuglesang in Zambia.(1) In order to identify in which of the four stages of mental development as stated by Piaget the illiterates should be placed, he undertook a number of tests meant to find out whether they understood the concept of conservation of: volume (two identical bottles holding the same quantity of lemonade were emptied into a wide and a narrow glass; is the volume still the same?); - or number (15 big stones and 15 small stones were laid in pairs, then the small stones were put close together;

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(1) Andreas Fuglesang, Applied Communication in Developing Countries: Ideas and Observations, Uppsala, Sweden, the Dag Hammerskjöld Foundation, 1973. A summary can be found in Literacy Discussion, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1971), pp. 47-50.

is the number still the same?); - or horizontality (a bottle half full of coloured water was shown in different positions, then 6 drawings were shown of half full bottles in different positions, only one of which showed the horizontal position of the water; can one recognize the correct drawing?)

In the evening the results are noted and the three divide the personal interviews: the lady takes care of the women and girls, while the male experts see that, in view of the rough estimate of the number of average and small farmers and landless labourers, a reasonable proportion of each group is interviewed. This should be relatively larger if two different languages are spoken in one village. The headman can also help if by genealogical different groups, or castes, or by religion, certain distinctions should further be made.

The schedule should probably be made that a larger village should be investigated on, say, Monday and Tuesday, and if it is felt that some further interviews are necessary, this can be done on Wednesday. A smaller village is then reserved for Thursday and Friday (taking that Saturday and Sunday should not be interviewing days), still leaving - if really needed - Saturday open for special interviews which in general should not occur, as it is better to have on that day some discussions among the team members to see how far their impressions coincide or show differences, and to finish off the reporting of the interviews, completed during the week if this work could not be done on the days of the interviews.

If in this way two villages are surveyed every week, then 10 weeks are necessary for 20 villages. If the area is much bigger than 200 villages, or if there is a heterogeneous population requiring more villages to be investigated, it is still possible to go on, as we had fixed three to six months for this study. However, our Quick Survey would give us with 20 villages still the time to have a report prepared in the last two weeks of three months. Nevertheless, the time taken by reading books and reports and by interviewing the regional administrator and chiefs of services of the total area is excluded from the estimate of three months.

These experiments carried out with children older than 7 years from a westernized cultural background usually produced the correct answers, but the result of all these experiments with the illiterates in Zambia supported the hypothesis that elementary logical concepts did not exist, or were very unstable.

The outcome shows that the illiterates should carefully be introduced to numeracy, while their hesitant attitude to general logic also shows that rules of language are not at all understandable in their present stage of mental development.

Another test, namely that of understanding different types of pictures should also be mentioned. Fuglesang had prepared four sorts of pictures, all of objects well known to the respondents, and by asking each person - and observing how they reacted - he found that photographs cut out of the background and pasted on blank cardboard were the type of picture easily recognized by the largest number of illiterates. After showing several pictures of the four types, he found that this type of photo obtained 230 points, the normal photo (with background) only 128 points, but a profile picture only 30. The most surprising result was that the simple line drawings, so often used, only got 15 points! It is certainly worthwhile to repeat this test in some villages to see whether the population in the area concerned would also show a clear result which can then be used immediately by illustrating the programme books.

After a village has been investigated, probably by three experts (say a sociologist, an agriculturist and a lady educator perhaps) one has a good number of local interviews. The team should go together to interview the head of the village, some other influential men, certain heads of families or castes ("high" and "low"), the teacher and any other local service officer, and will of course all attend the meeting.

Since we have had the village meetings and the many private interviews, it is clear that there have been made a good number of suggestions by the village people as to what type of education they would prefer. It is obvious that the programme as far as possible will take this into consideration which would enable the author to prepare a course with some hope of future satisfaction.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Guide has three different purposes: first, to show the experts in a functional literacy project the way in which they can get acquainted with the area and the rural population who would follow the course; next, to explain to the future participants the type of programme in literacy and farming (or perhaps another subject) which is going to be carried out; and finally, the data collected will also serve as the first part of an evaluation to be made of the whole course.

One should not expect a complete set of instructions, since circumstances differ very much according to the area, the culture and the actual plan of the programme, but it is hoped that the Guide will provide general suggestions leaving enough liberty to the experts to act on the special needs of the population with whom they have to deal, and according to their own professional interest.

The Guide limits itself to rural populations of the Third World. Urban problems are not discussed, but it has been tried to draw the attention to the role of tradition, and its positive sides are stressed. The traditional solutions are usually the best ones to solve existing problems and, since our course proposes to show new solutions, this can only work out favourably if with the course one or more new elements are brought into the culture. These will probably be constituted in the field of agriculture, and to accept these new elements traditional solutions will have to be changed. However, this shows us the need to understand fully the culture concerned and the way in which these changes - including literacy - can be made acceptable and even attractive.

The study will therefore concentrate on some specific issues which require a multidisciplinary approach often covered by the variety of experts required for a literacy-cum-development project: the structure of the society will be studied by a rural sociologist or a social anthropologist, a linguist may be required to study languages and/or dialects, an economist and an agricultural extension expert have their tasks to fulfil, whereas an educationist will clearly be needed as well. If a women's programme is to be introduced (and we can take it that this is the case), a lady expert should obviously be available. In order to limit the number of experts needed for the study, one might find combinations of expertise, so that the present study could be carried out by three or four specialists.

The experts should obviously start to study existing literature and reports on the region, and meanwhile make a short trip to acquaint themselves more generally with the people and the area. This will also be a useful exercise to get along with the interpreters so that a mutual understanding between them and the experts is created. In this way the contents of written information will become more quickly alive in the minds of all concerned, and possible points of doubt regarding the accuracy of written material will become points of further investigation in the local study later on.

Some useful points for the local inquiry have been specifically mentioned, but each case may show particular issues, perhaps not covered here. However, it is always useful to consider the social structure, since the power of who is taking decisions on matters of agriculture will depend on the question of who wields decisive power.

After this more general part, one has to find out the more specific issues of the villages where courses should be set up. Having used existing statistics (how reliable are they?) and other material, one has to discuss the various problems with the administrator and the officers of the services. It is possible that their views may not always coincide, but this is possibly a matter of the purpose of a service: a veterinary officer may have somewhat different views on the protection of land as compared to those of the forestry officer, while the administrator may use both points of view. Therefore, these discussions will help the experts very much in finding what problems should be considered. Furthermore, useful information can also be derived from the experience of missionaries and other non-official persons in the area, like salesmen of agricultural implements. Their views may be different from those of government officers.

Another point is the response of the villages: previous efforts may have shown whether one finds positive or negative responses to proposed improvements in a certain village. A map of the "programme area" should be prepared, showing what type of project the government has in mind for each village and what responses one has previously received. Furthermore, differences in origin of the population - often also showing linguistic and religious differences - should also be indicated on the map so that one has a relatively clear summary on the map of the area concerned.

Finally, the last part of the Guide discusses the way one should find information in the villages themselves. The Quick Survey Method is explained by which one can find - with the help of the village chief and other officials - in usually two days the broad lines of information required. If the area is not particularly heterogeneous, one can assume that visits to 20 villages will be sufficient to get acquainted with an area of about 200 villages. Taking two days (or sometimes three) per village visited by three or four experts, one would receive - besides statements made by the village headman and other influential persons - 25 or 30 interviews per village (of men and women).

The first day should not only be one of interviews, but one would organize (again with the help of the headman, warned in time) a village meeting. Here the experts can explain the purpose of the course, the subjects to be discussed (one should not forget arithmetic, usually very much desired), the importance of literacy, the role of agriculture, the time probably required, and leave sufficient opportunity to the villagers to ask questions or to make remarks. The next day one has the time for private interviews on questions regarding agriculture, education, interest in innovations, etc.

Two points of the Quick Survey Method should be mentioned: it does not use ready made questionnaires but uses a set of question points leaving it to the circumstances which aspect should be stressed, and the purpose is to gather information not particularly on the individual but on the group to which he/she belongs. In the text the way of selecting the 20 villages and the individuals to be interviewed is discussed.

It is proposed not to try to cover more than two villages per week: this will leave time for a third day if so required, as well as for the writing of notes on each village immediately.

It is clear that, when everything goes as foreseen, ten weeks would be required for 20 villages, collecting a good deal of village notes gathered by the experts and leaving them two weeks to work them out in a common report.

It may be wise to remind the reader of the need to select the interpreters with great care as it will depend on their performance what exact information one receives. Furthermore, although already stressed in the Guide, the experts should

be certain that the agricultural (or other) service will not only follow up their promises of development activities, but will also try out in the region concerned what they propose to do, so that no technical disappointments follow. Included herein is obviously the requirement of making available whatever is needed for the new method and the elaboration of new products, i.e. storing, marketing and credit facilities. It is clearly not the task of the experts to provide for all this, but they should be sure that the services concerned do so, as it is senseless to prepare people for a programme that cannot be carried out for technical reasons. Finally the extension service should publish simple brochures on the programme to give immediate follow-up to literacy.